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ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

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No. 8

How Successful Is Reading Instruction Today?

PAUL WITTY AND ANN COOMER¹

Criticisms of public schools are not uncommon. Many and varied factors prompt critics to compare unfavorably the schools of the present with those of the past. Often we hear generalizations similar to this:

The schools are no longer teaching the fundamentals. I know a boy thirteen years old in the sixth grade and he cannot read at all. When I was in school we never had anyone in the sixth grade who could not read.²

This type of generalization based on a single case is usually unwarranted. Similarly, when school surveys of reading attainment show a wide range of reading ability within each grade, critics remark that in their own school days, all pupils in a certain grade could read at least on that level; they point out, too, that pupils were not promoted unless they could read the materials of their grade.

When mobilization for a world war occurred and thousands of young men

¹Northwestern University.

²Cited by Elsa Butcher, "Are Schools Still Teaching Reading," *Peabody Journal of Education*, XXVIII (September, 1950), 99-103.

were identified who could not read fourth grade materials, critics cited this fact as evidence that public schools were failing to do the job they did twenty-thirty-or more years ago.

Criticisms of many other kinds are heard today. Sometimes they center around the neglect of phonic instruction or the failure of the teacher to stress grammar or to require mastery of the classics.

There are many reasons for these criticisms. One reason is the common human tendency to glorify the past, a tendency which finds expression in the "nostalgic halo" given to the school of earlier times. However, the tendency to criticize prevailing practice in schools has appeared again and again in the past. For example, Louis Kaplan quotes from a report made in 1845 by the Grammar School Committee of Boston:

They (tests administered) show beyond all doubt that a large proportion of the scholars in our first classes, boys and girls of 14 and 15 years of age, when called on to write simple sentences, to express their thoughts on common subjects

without the aid of a dictionary or a master, cannot write, without such errors in grammar, in spelling and in punctuation, as we should blush to see in a letter from a son or daughter of their age.³

Similarly, Judith L. Krugman and J. Wayne Wrightstone quote from Horace Mann who wrote in 1838:

I have devoted especial pains to learn with some degree of numerical accuracy, how far the reading in our schools, is an exercise of the mind in thinking and feeling, and how far it is a barren action of the organs of speech upon the atmosphere . . . The result is that more than eleven-twelfths of all the children in the reading classes in our schools, do not understand the meaning of the words they read; that they do not master the sense of the reading lessons, and that the ideas and feelings intended by the author to be conveyed to, and excited in, the reader's mind, still rest in the author's intention, never having yet reached the place of their destination.⁴

The foregoing criticisms are traceable in part to the common tendency to compare the present unfavorably with the past as well as to the widespread tendency of people today to express their insecurity by aggressive behavior or strong emotional reaction.

The criticism is traceable also to two other factors. The first is the greater heterogeneity in ability in the modern classroom. In the upper grades of the elementary school, one finds a wider range of ability than formerly. And in the modern high school there are many more very retarded readers—a condition which re-

³Louis Kaplan, "The Attack on Modern Education," *The Phi Delta Kappan*, XXXII (January, 1951). Also condensed in *The Education Digest* (March, 1951).

⁴Quoted from an annual school report of 1838 by Judith L. Krugman and J. Wayne Wrightstone in "Reading: Then and Now," *High Points*, XXX (April, 1948), 60-61.

flects the fact that the high school is less selective today. The trend toward universal education brings to the high school, pupils of a type that in past years withdrew during the elementary school period.

The second factor is also a consideration may be, like some standard tests, teaching reading have improved and materials of instruction are vastly superior. However, these methods and materials are different from those formerly employed. This difference is looked upon by many people as a weakness.

The foregoing reasons are sufficient to account for the statement that reading attainment is less efficient on the average today than in former years. We shall now examine the validity of this statement.

Reading Attainment Today and in the Past

In a recent article David Russell points out that in 1915 only seventy-one per cent of students who took the New York Regents Examination were successful while in 1947 eighty-four per cent passed the examination.⁵

The present day Regents Examinations may be, like some standard tests, more comprehensive and more difficult than tests used in the past. At any rate, the norm for some of these tests "are constantly being revised upwards."⁶

In 1948, Judith L. Krugman and J. Wayne Wrightstone reported the results of a city-wide testing program in New York City. During the years 1935 to

⁵Quoted by David H. Russell in reprint from March, 1951 issue of *The Education Digest*.

⁶Elsa Butcher. "Are Schools Still Teaching Reading?" *Peabody Journal of Education*, XXVIII (September, 1950).

1941, city-wide tests were administered to pupils in the sixth and eighth grades; from 1941 to 1946 city-wide tests were given to the seventh and eighth grade pupils.

After examining the test results, Krugman and Wrightstone conclude:

Certainly there is no evidence in these results to substantiate the claim that reading has become poorer. Nor can we state that the reading level has improved. Though averages do not by any means give a full picture they do at least reflect the general trends and the trend here shows that the reading level has remained about the same, that it has fluctuated close to the national norm, tending generally to be slightly above that norm.⁷

City-wide tests were given also in 1938 and later in 1947 to ninth grade students in New York City; and in 1940 and again in 1947 to eleventh grade students. Krugman and Wrightstone make these comments:

These results are similar to those for the elementary schools in that they show some fluctuations but no evidence of poorer reading achievement after the introduction of the activity program. All the results are above the national norm... Again the fact that these averages were slightly above the national norm should not blind us to the large number of children who need help in reading. Conversely, we should keep our sights clear and realize that in spite of these children who show difficulties, reading achievement levels since the adoption of the activity program have not deteriorated.⁸

To make a truly valid comparison of reading attainment at different times it is necessary to employ the same tests. There are several studies in which the same tests have been used for this purpose. For ex-

⁷Judith L. Krugman and J. Wayne Wrightstone, "Reading: Then and Now," *High Points XXX* (April, 1948), p. 60.

⁸*Ibid.*

ample, Russell cites a study by Caldwell and Courtis in which the attainment of pupils of 1845 were compared with that of pupils who in 1919 took the same tests. The 1919 students rated higher in spelling and on thought questions, but the 1845 students did better on questions requiring rote learning.⁹

More recently, the same tests have been given to pupils enrolled decades apart in the same grades. For example, Elizabeth L. Woods compared results of the new Stanford Tests administered to sixth grade pupils in thirty-three Los Angeles elementary schools in 1923-24 with results of the above tests given to pupils in the same grade and in the same schools in 1933-34. The sixth grade children of 1923 made an average score equalling the norm for grade 6, while the sixth grade children of 1933 attained a grade norm of 6.6.¹⁰

A somewhat different finding was reported by Mable E. Boss. Pupils of an earlier period did better in some areas than pupils tested twenty years later on the same tests. In 1916 Charles H. Judd made a survey of the St. Louis Public Schools. Tests in oral reading, which the schools emphasized at that time, and in silent reading, which was beginning to receive increased attention, were administered throughout grades II to VIII. In 1938 these tests were given again to pupils in grades II to VIII. The average scores of the pupils were higher in 1918 than in

⁹Quoted by David H. Russell in a reprint from the March, 1951 issue of *The Education Digest*.

¹⁰J. Wayne Wrightstone, "Growth in Basic Skills," Chapter 5, in *Evaluation of Modern Education*, edited by J. P. Leonard and A. C. Eurich.

1938 in oral reading; they were also a little higher in silent reading. Such results should not, however, be viewed as indicative of the true status of the results of instruction, since as Mable Boss indicated, oral reading receives less emphasis now than formerly and present practice fosters a critical attitude toward reading as well as other abilities hitherto neglected.¹¹

Most studies of reading ability in which the same tests have been employed at different times reveal superiority for present day pupils. For example, a detailed report on reading levels attained by sixth grade pupils in 1931 and in 1948 in six Springfield, Missouri schools was published in 1949 by F. H. Finch and V. W. Gillenwater.¹² In 1931 the mean score on the Thorndike-McCall Reading Scale was 22.54 while the mean score in 1948 was 23.32. The authors conclude:

In so far as the results attained in the six schools covered by this comparison are indicative of the effectiveness of reading instruction in the Springfield school system, there is reasonably good evidence that the teaching of reading in Springfield is now more successful in producing the outcomes we have measured than it was seventeen years ago.¹³

In 1948, William S. Gray administered in five schools of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the same oral and silent reading tests that had been given in 1916. Gray states: "The data showed that notable progress had been made in comprehension but that little or no progress had

¹¹Mable E. Boss, "Reading Then and Now," *School and Society*, LI (January 13, 1940), 62-64.

¹²F. H. Finch and V. W. Gillenwater, "Reading Achievement Then and Now," *The Elementary School Journal*, XLIX (April, 1949), 446-454.

¹³Ibid.

been made in oral reading and speed of silent reading."¹⁴

In 1949, Ernest W. Tiegs reported a comparison of achievement in basic skills before and after 1945. He compared the reading scores of approximately 230,000 elementary school pupils on the Stanford and the Progressive Achievement Tests given before and after 1945. These pupils represented sixty communities distributed throughout seven states. Tiegs concludes:

The achievement of public school pupils is not failing; in fact the data show a slight though probably not statistically significant gain in achievement.¹⁵

The results of the comparisons of reading achievement of pupils of former days with that of the present seem to indicate a definite though slight trend toward improvement in reading ability.

Opinions of Administrators, Supervisors, and Teachers

During the summer and fall of 1947, 300 teachers, administrators, and supervisors at Northwestern University were asked to state whether they believed that reading ability in our schools was equal, superior, or inferior to that of pupils of five, ten or fifteen years ago. Again in the summer of 1951, 200 teachers attending a Workshop in Reading at Whittier Col-

¹⁴William S. Gray. *Comparative Study of Achievement in Reading in 1916 and 1948*. Grand Rapids School Survey. Grand Rapids, Michigan Board of Education, 1949. Quoted by William S. Gray in "Summary of Reading Investigations July 1, 1948 to June 30, 1949," *Journal of Educational Research*, XLIII (February, 1950), 401-439.

¹⁵Ernest W. Tiegs, "A Comparison of Pupil Achievement in Basic Skills Before and After 1945," *Growing Points in Educational Research*, Official Report, 1949. Washington, D. C.: American Educational Research Association, 1949, pp. 50-57.

lege answered the same questions. About eighty per cent of the group (all of whom had taught five years or more) concurred in indicating that the reading ability of students at the present time is equal or superior to that of students five or more years ago. The largest number of respondents who stated that reading ability is now inferior to that existing a decade ago was found among the primary grade teachers. About twenty per cent of this group indicated that reading ability is inferior to that found a decade ago. The responses were remarkably similar in 1947 and in 1951.

These teachers pointed to the following factors as important in reducing the efficiency of primary grade instruction in reading:

- Excessive size of class
- Employment of inexperienced teachers
- Inadequate instructional materials
- Inadequate readiness materials
- Inadequate size of classrooms
- Unnatural and repetitious quality of some first grade materials

One fact stood out in the comments of these teachers and administrators. It was agreed that extreme reading retardation is greater today than ever before. For the junior and senior high school, reading retardation was said to constitute the school's most serious problem. The school people were not agreed concerning the causes of this problem; some emphasized the unselective nature of education today; the administrators called attention to the lack of diversified reading materials of proper difficulty to challenge the heterogeneous mass of students in the modern high school; and a few teachers stressed the neglect of the bright student.

These responses of school people add another type of evidence showing that reading instruction on the average is today as efficient as or slightly superior to that of ten or more years ago. Many teachers point out that the needs of pupils for reading skills are different and more varied today, that because of the heterogeneity in ability as well as the high frequency of reading retardation, junior and senior high schools must provide remedial reading programs. Inadequate provision is now made in the high school for the extremely retarded reader. And very few high schools have inaugurated developmental reading programs. Moreover, materials of instruction are conspicuously inadequate to meet the demands of these students of widely varying abilities, interests, and needs.

Very few teachers indicated that the high frequency of poor readers in the high school was traceable to present-day methods followed at any level. In fact, these teachers pointed out that attainment in reading is probably better than ever before among elementary pupils—in spite of the powerful bids made for the pupils' leisure by radio, the comic books, the motion picture and TV. They stated too that such inadequacies as exist are due primarily to our dilatoriness in applying our knowledge about successful methods of instruction in the development of reading programs for the junior and senior high school student.

Range of Ability

Surveys do show a wider range of ability today than ever before. Thus, William H. Waite reported in 1948 a range of over six years in the reading achievement of 2,212 third grade pupils in the

Omaha Public Schools. The lowest score was 0.5 grade level and the highest was above the seventh grade norm. He found that of the 2,212 pupils tested, 742 (33.6 per cent) had a reading achievement appropriate for their grade placement; 801 (36.2 per cent) fell below their grade level.¹⁶

Variation in reading levels of the pupils in each grade, although greater today, is not peculiar to schools of the present. Gray states that:

Between 1913 and 1920 thousands of tests in oral and silent reading were given to elementary school pupils in New York City, Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, Grand Rapids, Philadelphia, and many smaller school systems. The findings in each case revealed a surprisingly wide variation in the average scores of the pupils at each grade level and in each class.¹⁷

For example, Judd reported in 1916-1918 a survey of the quality and rate of reading in the Cleveland, Ohio, schools. A wide range of ability was found in the lower grades. However, in the seventh and eighth grades the pupils were fairly homogeneous in reading ability. This condition was attributed in part to the high degree of elimination of pupils who could not keep up with their classmates.¹⁸

During the following two decades, many studies revealed an increase in the

¹⁶William H. Waite, "The Improvement of Reading in the Omaha Public Schools," *Elementary School Journal*, XLVIII (February, 1948).

¹⁷William S. Gray, "Educational News and Editorial Comment," *The Elementary School Journal*, XLVI (May, 1946), 480-482.

¹⁸Charles H. Judd, *Measuring the Work of the Public Schools*. Cleveland, Ohio. The Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation, 1916. See also Charles H. Judd, *Reading: Its Nature and Development*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1918.

amount of overlapping of scores from grade to grade. However, median scores almost invariably were found to increase. One conspicuous fact was brought out again and again; namely, a marked increase transpired in the amount of extremely poor reading in the upper grades of the elementary school and in the high school. In fact, the amount of reading retardation has become so great that some high school principals regard it as the chief obstacle to efficient instruction.

The condition now existing among junior high school pupils is revealed by the following analysis. In June 1943 and again in January 1944, all graduates from the eighth grade classes of the St. Louis schools were given the Traxler Silent Reading Tests. Of 7,380 pupils tested, 2,169 read at or below the norms for sixth grade. It should be noted also that 491 pupils made scores which placed them at or below the fourth grade norms; while the ratings of 2,948 fell within the norms for grades five, six, and seven. It is significant also to observe that 968 of these pupils were at or above the eleventh grade level.¹⁹

A wide range in ability and a marked amount of reading retardation will also be found in every class throughout the junior and senior high school. These facts are revealed clearly by data reported yearly by Arthur Traxler and his associates.²⁰

¹⁹William Kottmeyer, "Improving Reading Instruction in the St. Louis Schools," *The Elementary School Journal*, Vol. XLV (1944), pp. 33-38.

²⁰Ben D. Wood, Arthur E. Traxler, et al., "1946 Testing Program in Independent Schools and Supplementary Studies," *Educational Records Bulletin*, No. 47. New York: Educational Records Bureau, 1947.

Gray states that wide variation in school achievement:

"has always existed and results from the fact that pupils vary widely in background, motives, and capacity to learn. The teachers of former decades were conscious of differences in rates of learning just as teachers are today and were just as deeply concerned about them. Few techniques of adjustment had developed, however, and pupils who were unable to profit from the uniform instruction which was customary often repeated given grades several times and finally dropped out of school. Not only are teachers today conscious of the differences in the achievement of these pupils, but many of them are employing various means of adjusting classroom activities to the needs of individuals. As revealed by scores of recent experiments, these efforts result not in greater uniformity but rather in greater diversity of achievement among pupils."²¹

It is clear, then, that the greatly expanded enrollment of the modern high school creates a demand for remedial programs to care for the very retarded pupil and for development of reading programs to provide for the wide range in ability that is found throughout the high school.

From the foregoing studies, one may conclude that instruction in reading is as successful today as it was at any period in the past. However, formal instruction in reading usually ceases in grade VI. The range of reading abilities in the junior and senior high school is so great as to necessitate additional instruction in reading for many of these pupils. This condition is traceable partly to the fact that pupils today continue their education for a longer period of time. Accordingly many pupils of a type that formerly withdrew remain in school. Moreover, additional instruction in

²¹William S. Gray, "Educational News and Editorial Comment," *The Elementary School Journal*, XLVI (May, 1946), 480-482.

reading is needed because of the great differences in reading goals occasioned by the varied demands for reading in the modern high school. Nor should we disregard the threat to reading presented by the almost universal appeal of TV and other present day opportunities for effortless leisure. Teachers must do a more efficient job of teaching reading than ever before. Children must be led to enjoy the process and the results of reading if reading is to compete successfully for some of their leisure time. Efficient instruction is today jeopardized by placing very large numbers of primary children under relatively unskilled teachers. This practice must cease if we are to maintain the present status of reading attainment.

The studies show clearly that junior and senior high schools today face a serious problem because of the large numbers of poor readers and the wide range of reading ability found within every class. There is only one answer to this problem—the initiation of remedial reading as a temporary expedient and the widespread adoption of developmental reading programs. These programs need not return to former methods of teaching—they should follow established principles of reading instruction. For we *do* know how to teach reading. The principles on which efficient instruction is based are well established.

These principles were followed in the development of the Army's program of instruction which was employed during World War II in teaching functionally illiterate soldiers to read. This program was characterized by (a) definite objectives, (b) high motive and interest, (c) careful study and proper grouping of in-

When It's Christmas In Your Heart

CHRISTMAS BOOKLIST FOR CHILDREN

VIRGINIA C. McCUALEY*

As we again approach the time when Christmas candles, fires, and stars reflected glow in the eyes of happy children, it seems fitting to suggest some books for juvenile reading. At this time-of-sharing, fortunate adults who share the literary experiences of children may find miraculously that their hearts are clean and ready for Christmas. Neither they nor the children can pass lightly over philosophy such as that of Aunt Marthy: "But Christmas, Ronnie, is something in your heart. It's a feeling that doesn't go with anger and hatred. And my heart's got to be clean and ready for Christmas. It's going to be clean as this lighthouse, Ronnie."¹

Alden, Raymond M. *Why the Chimes Rang.* Bobbs, 1945. \$2.00

*Armour, Anobel. *The Little Shepherd.* Tell-Well, 1951. \$1.25

Association for Childhood Education. *Told Under the Christmas Tree;* il. by Petershams. Macmillan, 1948. \$3.00

Bailey, Carolyn S. *Little Folks' Merry Christmas Book.* Whitman, '48. \$1.25

Balch, Glenn. *Christmas Horse.* Crowell, 1949. \$2.50

Baruch, Dorothy W. *Christmas Stocking.* Scott, 1946. \$.50

Becker, May L., ed. *The Home Book of Christmas.* Dodd, 1941. \$3.00

Beebe, Catherine. *Christmas This Way.* Oxford, 1943. \$1.00

Bemelmans, Ludwig. *Hansi.* Viking, 1934. \$2.00

¹Sauer, Julia L. *The Light at Tern Rock,* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), pp. 47-48.

*Teachers College of Connecticut, New Britain, Connecticut.

Bernhard, Josephine B. *Lullaby.* Roy, 1944. \$1.00

Bertail, Inez. *A Child's Book of Christmas Carols;* il. by Masha. Random, 1942. \$2.00

Bianco, Margery Williams. *The Velveteen Rabbit.* Doubleday, 1926. \$1.50

Bianco, Pamela. *Joy and the Christmas Angel.* Oxford, 1949. \$1.75

Bishop Claire H. *Augustus.* Viking, 1945. \$1.50

*Brewton, Sara and John E. *Christmas Bells Are Ringing.* Macmillan, '51. \$2.50

Brock, Emma W. *The Birds' Christmas Tree.* Knopf, 1946. \$1.50

Brown, Margaret Wise. *A Pussycat's Christmas.* Crowell, 1949. \$1.50

Brunhoff, Jean de. *Babar and Father Christmas.* Random, 1940. \$3.00

Burack, A. S., ed. *Christmas Plays for Young Actors.* Plays, Inc., '50. \$2.75

Burgess, Thornton. *The Christmas Reindeer.* Macmillan, 1926. \$2.00

Carrol, Gladys H. *Christmas Without Johnny.* Macmillan, 1950. \$2.50

Carter, Elsie H. *Christmas Candles.* Holt, 1915. \$2.00

Cavanah, Frances and Pannell, Lucile. *Holiday Round Up.* Macrae-Smith, 1950. \$3.00

Ceder, Georgianna D. *Ethan, the Shepherd Boy.* Abingdon, 1948. \$2.00

Chambers, Maria C. *Three Kings.* Oxford, 1946. \$1.50

Crampton, Gertrude, comp. *The Golden Christmas Book.* Simon and Schuster, 1947. \$1.50

Crothers, Samuel M. *Miss Muffet's Christmas Party.* Houghton, 1929. \$1.50

- *Crowley, Maude. *Azor and the Blue-Eyed Cow*. Oxford, 1951. \$2.25
- Dalgliesh, Alice, comp. *Christmas: A Book of Stories Old and New*. Scribner, 1934. \$2.50
New ed. 1950. \$3.00
- De Angeli, Marguerite. *Petite Suzanne*. Doubleday, 1937. \$2.50
- De Angeli, Marguerite. *Turkey for Christmas*. Jr. Literary Guild, '44. \$1.00
- Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol*; il. by Arthur Rackham. Lippincott, 1934. \$1.00; il. by Everett Shinn. Winston, 1938. \$2.75
- Dickens, Charles. *Christmas Stories*. World (Rainbow Classics), 1946. \$1.00 Dodd, 1947. \$2.00
- Dickinson, Asa D. and Skinner, Ada M. *Children's Book of Christmas Stories*. Doubleday, 1924. \$2.00
- *Doibier, Maurice. *Torten's Christmas Secret*. Little, Brown, 1951. \$2.50
- *Dorian, Edith. *Ask Dr. Christmas*; il. by Nora Unwin. Whittlesey House, 1951. \$2.25
- Duvoisin, Roger A. *The Christmas Whale*. Knopf, 1945. \$1.25
- Dyer, Kate Gambold. *Turky Trott and the Black Santa*. Platt and Munk, 1942. \$.75
- Eaton, Anne T., ed. *The Animals' Christmas*; il. by Valenti Angelo. Viking, 1944. \$2.00
- *Elsie-Jean. *Wee Robin's Christmas Song*. Nelson, 1951. \$1.50
- Ewing, Juliana. *Three Christmas Trees*. Macmillan, 1930. \$1.75
- Farjeon, Eleanor. *Come Christmas*; il. by R. Field. Lippincott, 1927. \$2.00
- Fatio, Louise. *The Christmas Forest*; il. by Roger Duvoisin. Aladdin, 1950. \$1.25
- Fenner, Phyllis, ed. *Feasts and Frolics*. Knopf, 1949. \$2.50
- Field, Rachel L. *All Through the Night*. Macmillan, 1940. \$.50
- Field, Rachel L. *The Bird Began to Sing*. Morrow, 1932. \$.50
- Field, Rachel L. *Christmas Time*. Macmillan, 1941. \$.50
The First Christmas Tree. Victory, 1949. \$1.75
- Frost, Frances. *Christmas in the Woods*. Harper, 1942. \$1.50
- Frost, Frances. *Sleigh Bells for Windy Foot*. McGraw, 1948. \$2.00
- Gardner, Horace J. *Let's Celebrate Christmas*. Barnes, 1940. \$2.50
- Glover, Florida R. *The First Christmas*. Dutton, 1943. \$1.00
- *Goudge, Elizabeth. *The Reward of Faith*. Coward, 1951. \$2.75
- Graham, Eleanor. *Welcome Christmas*. Dutton, 1932. \$2.00
- Grahame, Kenneth. *Bertie's Escapade*. Lippincott, 1949. \$1.50
- Hall, William. *Christmas Pony*; il. by R. Duvoisin. Knopf, 1948. \$1.75
- Hark, Mildred and McQueen, Noel. *Special Plays for Special Days*. Plays, Inc., 1947. \$3.00
- Heath, Marian R. *Margaret Tarrant's Christmas Garland*. Branford, '42. \$3.50
- Hurlbutt, Isabelle. *Little Heiskell*. Dutton, 1928. \$1.75
- Hyett, F. B., comp. *Fifty Christmas Poems for Children*. Appleton Century, 1923. \$1.00
- Jackson, Kathryn. *The Animals' Merry Christmas*. Simon and Schuster, 1950. \$1.50
- Jones, Elizabeth O. *Big Susan*. Macmillan, 1947. \$2.00
- Jones, Elizabeth O. *Maminka's Children*. Macmillan, 1940. \$2.50
- Jones, Jessie O., comp. *A Little Child*; il. by E. O. Jones. Viking, 1946. \$2.00
- *Karasz, Ilonka. *Christmas Calendar*. Harper, 1951. \$1.75
- Kelly, Eric P. *The Christmas Nightingale*; il. by M. De Angeli. Macmillan, 1932. \$2.00
- Kerr, Annie B. *So Gracious Is the Time*. Women's Press, 1938. \$1.25

- Kingman, Lee. *The Best Christmas*. Doubleday, 1949. \$1.50
- Knight, Marjorie. *Alexander's Christmas Eve*. Dutton, 1938. \$1.75
- Lange, Ann. *The Eskimo Store*. Whitman, 1948. \$1.50
- Lathrop, Dorothy P. *An Angel in the Woods*. Macmillan, 1947. \$2.00
- Lillie, Amy Morris. *The Book of Three Festivals*. Dutton, 1948. \$2.50
- Lindsay, Maud and Poulsen, Emilie. *The Joyous Guests*. Lothrop, 1921. \$2.00 Cadmus, \$.96
- *Lloyd, Mary Edna. *Jesus, the Little New Baby*. Abingdon, 1951. \$1.00
- Lohan, Robert. *Christmas Tales for Reading Aloud*. Daye, 1946. \$3.75
- *Lovelace, Maud Hart. *The Trees Kneel at Christmas*. Crowell, 1951. \$2.50
- Lowrey, Janette S. *Annunciata and the Shepherds*. Gentry, 1938.
- McSpadden, J. Walker. *The Book of Holidays*. Crowell, 1940. \$3.00
- *Mariana (Foster, Marian C.) *Miss Flora McFlimsey and the Baby New Year*. Lothrop, 1951. \$1.00
- Mariana (Foster, Marian C.) *Miss Flora McFlimsey's Christmas Eve*. Lothrop, 1949. \$1.00
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Trends in Language, Spelling, and Handwriting

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The assignment of presenting recent trends in improving the teaching of language, spelling, and writing is a challenge. This report is presented under two headings: "Trends in Theory That Apply to the Three Areas" and "Trends in Practice Evidenced by Research in Each Area."

The decade from 1940 to 1950 evidenced considerable agreement among educators about the direction and shape of things to come in language instruction (16). There are five general areas in which we can collect the ideas about theory and practice. They are: curriculum development, the language arts, the psychology of language, personal-social-vocational development through language, and school-society resources and responsibilities.

A major contribution in *curriculum development* has been the work of the Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English, Dora V. Smith, Director (7,56). It has emphasized differentiation of instruction in terms of language growth and child development, and in a more systematic, balanced, and unified progression of skills and appreciations. The goal set is effective and independent usage of standard English, varying only with the complexity of the ideas to be presented and the demands of the sayer and sayee. Improvement in language is based on activities growing out of experience in which the purposes to be achieved are clarity and ease of communication. They dictate the resources of language. Grammar, usage, and spelling

are developed through the communication of meanings. When the use of the American language is based on experiences encountered in all classes and situations, current usage and changes can be appropriately recognized. Rules of language are taught inductively and constructively through practice in the understanding, expression, and communication of meaning. The curriculums advocated are dynamic and are geared to a changing society. They are aided—not limited—by tradition.

Competence in dealing with meanings—structured from experience—is the crux of communication. The complementary nature of the *language arts* (listening, speaking, reading, writing) has led educators to unify rather than separate them for instructional purposes (5, 6, 10, 18, 32, 45, 59). More completely recognized than before are the sequences of growth in the use of language to analyze, extend, and refine experiences. Bacon (2) ascribed to the language arts certain values which are being more fully integrated into current practices when he wrote: "Reading maketh a full man; conference, a ready man; and writing, an exact man." But we understand that the degree to which an individual can control language and more or less stabilize experience by words is dependent upon the matureness of his mind. As has been implied, then, language—its meanings, organization, and

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mechanics—is subordinated to *experience* and *purposes*.

Implicit in the *psychology of language* is the analysis of experience-language relationships. The problem of finding the referent in the process of making constructs requires active, efficient, and purposeful mental effort (4, 9, 29, 33, 37, 46). As Horn (26, p. 391) states: "Improvements will come . . . from the constant use of language in relation to experiences and purposes which give it meaning." Language is indispensable not only for unifying and indexing experience but also for the organization of thought. The latter is influenced by the multiple meanings of words, by the relation of words to each other, and by the experience of the sayer and sayee. To proceed from experience through language to meaning is to clearly recognize the function of language in communication. Teaching is regarded as the guidance of the basic processes of differentiation and integration of experience-language relationships.

Language as a force in the *personal-social-vocational* life of an individual underlies all human development (7, 23, 30, 34, 50). Neglect in this area would mean disregard for the role which the individual must play in effective group thinking. When Johnson said, "Speak so that I may see you," he recognized that the language an individual uses reflects his interests, attitudes, and ideals. Humans react and interact, resolve inner conflicts, and achieve success to the extent that they have insight into how language works. To the extent that literature manifests the power to convey ideas, ideals, and aspirations, it can lift teaching into the realm of human

guidance. But teaching must be directed toward such goals and not left to incidental learning. Language also presents a grave danger. It can be used emotionally, connotatively, and abstractly. It can serve the hypnotist, the propagandist, the demagogue, and the pseudo-scientist. But in a democratic society, the freedom of language helps man explore the unknown in search of new truths.

Progress is being made toward determining *school-society resources and responsibilities* in helping children learn to use the language of their culture. The school, as only one of many social agencies, plays an increasingly important role in guiding more effective use of language (6, 7, 9, 10, 18, 32). But to achieve language facility in varied situations (pupil-teacher, young-old, guest-host, employer-employee, citizen-state) requires a well-integrated language program utilizing all resources. Language in action in a democracy presupposes that the authority of interpretation is a two-way responsibility between the expresser and receiver. Such goals are being attained under varied curriculum plans.

The report on trends in practice evidenced by research will be limited to three areas: the teaching of English, of spelling, and of handwriting.

Greene (15), in his survey on methods of teaching English, concluded that knowledge of English correctness, sentence structure, and punctuation is best achieved by direct methods of teaching, marked by *repeated* and *spaced* habit-forming experiences. This implies that an effective language program must provide systematic instruction.

Pooley (44), in a review, concluded that evaluation of compositions can be made more objective by using group judgments, by directing attention to content rather than to errors, and by utilizing experienced teacher judgment. He further concluded that correctness of usage is determined by the needs of communication and insight into meaning, intent, and tone; and that there is a tremendous gap between the *aims* of English instruction and the *methods and materials* being used.

Loban (35) and Seegers (54), in summaries on studies of language, reported conclusions that were in agreement with many of those just presented. They especially emphasized the need to teach language skills in their relation to effective communication. As Seegers stated, ". . . grammar is a subsequent, language an antecedent, development."

Surveys of practices pointed up specific differences between aims and practices such as over-emphasis on rules, usage exercises, and isolated drills; lack of uniform sequences in development of language subject matter; inappropriate differentiation of instruction, and failure to eliminate difficulties in English (8, 45, 48, 55).

Over-emphasis of grammatical analysis with elementary school children is not only being discouraged, but it is being urged that such instruction be postponed because it impedes development in communication (36, 47). The teaching of oral skills necessary for effective communication at both the elementary and high school levels has resulted in renewed attention to listening skills (3, 60, 63, 64). Effective listening presupposes readiness, purposes, and ability to grasp mean-

ings. At the same time, ease and clarity of spoken communication are stressed (42). Errors in punctuation, sentence structure, and verb usage are frequent at high school and college levels, and they are similar to those recorded in the elementary grades (20, 21, 22, 38). Furthermore, there is a need for better teacher-training in the use of scales to evaluate written work (17, 48).

Seegers (53), in his review of research in vocabulary development, distinguishes between word lists and "meaning vocabularies" by noting that ideas—not words—are difficult or easy. "A word is difficult or easy . . . according to the amount and type of association the child (or adult) has had with the concept for which the word stands." Again, studies confirm the value and importance of learning to use language in functional situations.

The semanticists (1, 7, 9, 39, 40, 41, 52), increasing in number, are alerting educators and others to the need for critical examination of the language used. They call attention to the multiplicity of language functions, such as: denotation and connotation, referential and emotive; concrete and abstract; fact and opinion; and tone, intent, and mood.

A review of the studies in *spelling* (57) indicates continued attention to *words to be taught, investigation of achievement, methods of teaching, and the inter-relatedness of basic language skills*.

An extensive study of children's writing vocabularies was made by Rinsland (49). As a result, the cruciality of certain words in this list for instructional purposes is pointed up by Rinsland as well as by Hildreth (25) and by Fogler (11).

Experiments by Fox and Eaton (12, 13) in Indiana indicated that achievement was highest when spelling was taught five days a week, that the optimum length of a spelling period should be 20 minutes, that only certain spelling rules should be emphasized, and that spelling should be checked in all written work done by the students.

Differentiating instruction in spelling according to pupil abilities is most valuable (27, 28, 31, 58). Techniques that have proved successful include attention to rate of forgetting, checking test papers by pupils under teacher guidance, studying the whole word rather than in syllabified form, and excusing certain pupils from formal instruction. At the secondary level, studies have been concerned with the need for systematic instruction and the words to be taught.

Research (51, 61) continued to justify the emphasis on the relationship between spelling and reading, word meaning, and word recognition.

Surveys (14, 24, 43) to determine current practices in the teaching of handwriting reveal a number of trends. In most situations, instruction in manuscript writing is started in Grade I. The shift from manuscript to cursive usually occurs at the third-grade level, and opinions support the idea that it is not difficult to change. The time devoted to formal instruction varies from 75 to 100 minutes per week. Commercially-prepared systems of handwriting are widely used, but studies show much variance in the letter forms presented.

A statement by Samuel E. Fleming about the language arts curriculum might be applied to language in general (62, p.

v). There is no finality about language. It represents thinking and experience to date. That thinking and experience will change and, as it does, the language will change. After all, a language is a chameleon that takes on the color of the thinking and practice of the culture which uses it.

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Children's Book Awards

LILLIAN HOLLOWELL¹

Book awards have exerted a marked influence on children's literature. The publishing of children's books is no longer considered an "infant industry" but has become big business, especially at the low price level. Awards have helped to counteract some of the mental pabulum which our age of mass production turns out by focusing attention on worthwhile books; also they have helped to raise literary standards. They have stimulated writers, illustrators, and publishers to produce books beautifully conceived and executed, and these in turn have served as guides in the selection of superior books, thereby influencing taste and enriching children's lives.

The prizes which authors, artists, and publishers covet most are the Newbery and the Caldecott, given every year by the Children's Library Association, a division of the American Library Association.

The earliest award, the Newbery, has a standing in its field greater than that of any of the Pulitzer Prizes; in fact, it is more nearly comparable to something like the Distinguished Service Cross. It was begun in 1922 and appropriately named after John Newbery, British publisher and eighteenth century bookseller, who has been called the father of children's literature. It was he who first conceived the idea of publishing books expressly for children.

The Caldecott, established in 1938, is named for the great English illustrator of the nineteenth century, Randolph Calde-

cott, whose name is linked with the beginning of the modern era of good picture books for children.

The donor of the medal is Frederic G. Melcher, editor of *Publishers' Weekly* and founder of Children's Book Week, who makes the formal presentation to the winners at the dinner meeting given during the annual convention of the American Library Association.

The announcement of the winners is first made in the office of Mr. Melcher and then again at a reception given by the members of the Children's Book Council.

The terms of the awards as set forth by the American Library Association are as follows:

1. The Newbery Medal is awarded to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children, written during the year just elapsed by an author who is a citizen or resident of the United States. There are no limitations as to the character of the book except that it be an original work, or if traditional in origin, new to children's literature and the result of individual research, the retelling and reinterpretation being the writer's own.

2. The Caldecott Medal is awarded for the most distinguished American picture book for children chosen from those first published in the United States during the previous year. The artist must be a citizen or resident of the United States. The award can be given to two artists who work together. The book must be "the creation of

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an artist, the product of his initiative and imagination." The text need not be written by the artist but should be worthy of the book. Distinction should be made between a "picture book" and an "illustrated book." The story should not be as important as the pictures. There are no limitations on the character of the illustrations nor on the age-level of the book, but most picture books are intended for younger children.

3. The unanimous vote of the committee is required for either the Newbery or the Caldecott to be awarded to the same person twice. [So far, no one has been chosen the second time to receive the same award. Robert Lawson is the only one thus far to receive both the Newbery and the Caldecott awards.]

The Newbery-Caldecott Committee, representing a complete cross section of types of work with children as well as wide geographic distribution, consists of twenty-two members: officers and committee chairmen of the Children's Library Association; the president and four members of the American Association of School Librarians; and three members elected at large.

The method of selection follows somewhat this procedure. Early in the year the members of the committee submit first, second, and third choices. These names are tabulated and distributed for study as well as the votes from the general membership, unless the first vote is decisive, which is extremely unlikely. To save time, points are assigned and the winner must be so many points ahead of the next title, or another balloting must take place until one does emerge that far ahead. Forty-eight points make a book a winner providing it has a twelve-point lead over the next in line.

Concerning the voting in 1951, the

Committee Chairman, Marian Herr, writes:

The voting on the first ballot was widely scattered, but the results of the first voting were tabulated and sent to the committee for consideration, and each member was urged to read every title which had received even one first choice vote. When the second ballot came back, it was clear, even before the votes were in, that the winners were *Amos Fortune* and *The Egg Tree*. . . You will also be interested to know that the membership vote was also decisive and agreed with the committee vote, which makes the whole process most auspicious.

The selection of the winners is not always so harmonious. Since so much honor is attached to these prizes, feeling might run very high. With so many books being published, it must be difficult indeed to decide which one is the most "distinguished."

Here are the awards that have been made through 1951:

Newbery Winners

- 1922 THE STORY OF MANKIND. Hendrick Van Loon. Liveright Pub. Corp.
- 1923 THE VOYAGES OF DR. DOOLITTLE. Hugh Lofting. Lippincott.
- 1924 THE DARK FRIGATE. Charles Boardman Hawes. Little, Brown.
- 1925 TALES FROM SILVER LANDS. Charles J. Finger. Doubleday.
- 1926 SHEN OF THE SEA. Arthur Bowie Chrisman. E. P. Dutton.
- 1927 SMOKY, THE COWHORSE. Will James. Scribner's.
- 1928 GAYNECK: THE STORY OF A PIGEON. Dhan Gopal Mukerji. Dutton.
- 1929 THE TRUMPETER OF KRAKOW. Eric P. Kelly. Macmillan.

- 1930 Hitty: Her First Hundred Years. Rachel Field. Macmillan.
- 1931 The Cat Who Went to Heaven. Elizabeth Coatsworth. Macmillan.
- 1932 Waterless Mountain. Laura Adams Armer. Longmans, Green.
- 1933 Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze. Elizabeth Foreman Lewis. Winston.
- 1934 The Story of the Author of Little Women: Invincible Louisa. Cornelia Meigs. Little, Brown.
- 1935 Dobry. Monica Shannon. Viking Press.
- 1936 Caddie Woodlawn. Carol Ryrie Brink. Macmillan.
- 1937 Roller Skates. Ruth Sawyer. Viking.
- 1938 The White Stag. Kate Seredy. Viking.
- 1939 Thimble Summer. Elizabeth Enright. Rinehart.
- 1940 Daniel Boone. James Daugherty. Viking.
- 1941 Call It Courage. Armstrong Sperry. Macmillan.
- 1942 The Matchlock Gun. Walter D. Edmonds. Dodd, Mead.
- 1943 Adam of the Road. Elizabeth Janet Gray. Viking.
- 1944 Johnny Tremain. Esther Forbes. Houghton Mifflin.
- 1945 Rabbit Hill. Robert Lawson. Viking.
- 1946 Strawberry Girl. Lois Lenski. Lippincott.
- 1947 Miss Hickory. Carolyn Sherwin Bailey. Viking.
- 1948 Twenty-one Balloons. William Pene du Bois. Viking.
- 1949 King of the Wind. Marguerite Henry. Rand McNally.
- 1950 Door in the Wall. Marguerite de Angeli. Doubleday.
- 1951 Amos Fortune: Free Man. Elizabeth Yates. Aladdin.
- Caldecott Winners*
- 1938 Animals of the Bible. Dorothy Lathrop. Lippincott.
- 1939 Mei-Li. Thomas Handforth. Doubleday.
- 1940 Abraham Lincoln. Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire. Doubleday.
- 1941 They Were Strong and Good. Robert Lawson. Viking.
- 1942 Make Way for Ducklings. Robert McCloskey. Viking.
- 1943 The Little House. Virginia Lee Burton. Houghton Mifflin.
- 1944 Many Moons. (James Thurber) Louis Slobodkin. Harcourt, Brace.
- 1945 Prayer for a Child. (Rachel Field) Elizabeth Orton Jones. Macmillan.
- 1946 The Rooster Crows: A Book of American Rhymes and Jingles. Maud and Miska Petersham. Macmillan.
- 1947 The Little Island. (Golden MacDonald) Leonard Weisgard. Doubleday.
- 1948 White Snow, Bright Snow. (Alvin Tresselt) Roger Duvoisin. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.
- 1949 The Big Snow. Berta and Elmer Hader. Macmillan.
- 1950 Song of the Swallows. Leo Politi. Scribner's.
- 1951 The Egg Tree. Katherine Milhous. Scribner's.

Frequently, one hears disapproval of some of the selections. Teachers say children do not like them; they are too difficult. As to the charge that the selections are too difficult and appeal only to the better readers, one may reply by saying so does any good book whether for children or adults. Only good readers can appreciate the best. Too, one must consider the wide range of age interest and reading ability which is covered by the term "children." Books written for adults have been adopted by children and vice versa. The prize books cannot be graded. They appeal to varying ages and types of readers. If a child does not care for the book at one age-level, perhaps he may later.

Another point which needs to be emphasized is that critics should consider the rules governing the awards and take into account the rest of the books published that year. Remember the term, the *most distinguished* book for children published the previous year. Some years are leaner than others. The winner is selected not because of its popularity but because of its remarkable qualities.

Jean Poindexter Colby, editor of *Junior Reviewers*, agrees with others who think the judges in making their selections place children's enjoyment or interest as secondary. Besides excellence of idea and style, she lists, what seem to her two other determining factors: format and past performance. Some books she thinks would not have been selected had they not been "dressed up." Also it would seem that one's chances to win are better if he has piled up a record.

On the other hand, she discounts the idea of favoritism, pull, or bribery. "As

long as the committees are in charge of women of the calibre of Ruth Hewitt, and as long as the committees are as carefully selected as they are, this sort of thing is reduced to a minimum. A really fine book will get consideration. It may be yanked out of the running because most of the committee members are backing other horses, but if it is good it may be backed too."²

In reporting the 1950 Newbery Award, *Newsweek* made this statement: "It is scrupulously administered and as free of political and commercial influence as any such selection can be."³

Marian Herr admits that the system of choosing is not perfect and emphasizes the fact that the committee welcomes correspondence and suggestions.⁴ It might be well for critics to keep in mind that as long as human nature varies so markedly differences of opinion must prevail.

Rapidly achieving national prominence and importance are the Spring Book Festival Awards, established in 1937 by the New York *Herald Tribune*. The purpose of the Spring Book Festival is to balance more evenly the output of new books between the fall and the spring. Formerly, as May Lamberton Becker expresses it, "there was congestion for three months in the fall and anemia for the rest of the year."⁵

²Jean Poindexter Colby, "Children's Book Awards," *Junior Reviewers*, IX (January, 1951).

³"Newbery Award," *Newsweek*, March 27, 1950, p. 88.

⁴Marian Herr, "Selection of the Newbery-Caldecott Awards," *Wilson Library Bulletin* (January, 1951), 384.

⁵May Lamberton Becker, "The First Children's Spring Book Festival," *Elementary English Review*, XV (March, 1938), 98.

The Spring Book Festival began by awarding two prizes of \$250 each—one for the best book for younger children and one for older children—and named five books in each group as Honor Books. Since 1941, the amount given is \$200 each to the winner in three age divisions—older boys and girls, children 8-12, and picture book group—and four Honor Books are chosen in each of the three age-levels. The New York *Herald Tribune* issues in May a special Spring Book Festival Number corresponding to the Children's Book Week Number in the fall. In cooperation with book stores from coast to coast, the *Tribune* celebrates in May a week known as Spring Book Festival and features in every way possible the uses and delights of books.

The judges are eminent men and women representing some special fields of interest in children's reading. At first, the committee consisted of four and the chairman, May Lamberton Becker, Editor of Books for Young People, *Herald Tribune*. Now two judges for each of the three age-levels are chosen each year.

In reply to an inquiry concerning the rules governing the awards, Louise Seaman Bechtel, Editor of Books for Boys and Girls, *Herald Tribune*, writes: "There could not be rules in looking for a 'best' book in three different age classifications. Each year a new group of judges must decide on what is outstanding and which one title best fulfills that difficult combination of distinction plus appeal for boys and girls." The books considered must have been published between January 1 and June 1 of the current year. Otherwise, the judges are free in making their choices.

The awards through 1951 are as follows:

1937

Younger age: **SEVEN SIMEONS**. Boris Artzybasheff. Viking.

Older age: **THE SMUGGLER'S SLOOP**. Rob White, 111. Little, Brown.

1938

Younger age: **THE HOBBIT**. J. R. R. Tolkien. Houghton Mifflin.

Older age: **THE IRON DUKE**. John R. Tunis. Harcourt.

1939

Younger age: **THE STORY OF HORACE**. Alice N. Coats. Coward McCann.

Older age: **THE HIRED MAN'S ELEPHANT**. Phil Strong. Dodd, Mead.

1940

Younger age: **THAT MARIO**. Lucy Herndon Crockett. Henry Holt.

Older age: **CAP'N EZRA PRIVATEER**. James D. Adams. Harcourt.

1941

Picture book: **IN MY MOTHER'S HOUSE**. Ann Nolan Clark. Viking.

Eight to twelve: **PETE**. Tom Robinson. Viking.

Older boys and girls: **CLARA BARTON**. Mildred Mastin Pace. Scribner's.

1942

Picture book: **MR. TOOTWHISTLE'S INVENTION**. Peter Wells. Winston.

Eight to twelve: **I HAVE JUST BEGUN TO FIGHT**. Commander Edward Ellsberg. Dodd, Mead.

Older boys and girls: **NONE BUT THE BRAVE.** Rosamond Van Der Zee Marshall. Houghton Mifflin.

1943

Picture book: **FIVE GOLDEN WRENS.** Hugh Troy. Oxford.

Eight to twelve: **THESE HAPPY GOLDEN YEARS.** Laura Ingalls Wilder. Harper.

Older boys and girls: **PATTERN ON THE WALL.** Elizabeth Yates. Knopf.

1944

Picture book: **A RING AND A RIDDLE.** M. Ilin and E. Segal and the illustrator, Vera Bock. Lippincott.

Eight to twelve: **THEY PUT OUT TO SEA.** Roger Duvoisin. Knopf.

Older boys and girls: **STORM CANVAS.** Armstrong Sperry. Winston.

1945

Picture book: **LITTLE PEOPLE IN A BIG COUNTRY.** Norma Cohn. Oxford.

Eight to twelve: **GULF STREAM.** Ruth Brindze. Vanguard.

Older boys and girls: **SANDY.** Elizabeth Janet Gray. Viking.

1946

Picture book: **FARM STORIES.** Kathryn and Bryan Jackson, shared with illustrator, Gustaf Tenggren. Simon & Schuster.

Eight to twelve: **THIRTEENTH STONE.** Jean Bothwell. Harcourt.

Older boys and girls: **THE QUEST OF THE CONDOR.** Clayton Knight. Knopf.

1947

Picture book: **OLEY: THE SEA MONSTER.** Marie Hall Ets. Viking.

Eight to twelve: **PANCAKES—PARIS.** Claire Huchet Bishop. Viking.

Older boys and girls: **TWENTY-ONE BALLOONS.** William Pene du Bois. Viking.

1948

Picture book: **MY FATHER'S DRAGON.** Ruth Stiles Gannett. Random.

Eight to twelve: **DAUGHTER OF THE MOUNTAIN.** Louise Rankin. Viking.

Older boys and girls: **CRIMSON ANCHOR: A SEA MYSTERY.** Felix Riesenbergs, Jr. Dodd, Mead.

1949

Picture book: **BONNIE BESS: THE WEATHERVANE HORSE.** Alvin Tresselt and Marylin Hafner. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard.

Eight to twelve: **BUSH HOLIDAY.** Stephen Fennimore. Doubleday.

Older boys and girls: **START OF THE TRAIL.** Louise Dickerson Rich. Lippincott.

1950

Picture book: **SUNSHINE.** Ludwig Bemelmans. Simon & Schuster.

Eight to twelve: **WINDFALL FIDDLE.** Carl Carmer. Knopf.

Older boys and girls: **AMOS FORTUNE: FREE MAN.** Elizabeth Yates. Aladdin.

1951

Picture books: **JEANNE MARIE COUNTS HER SHEEP.** Francoise. Scribner's.

Eight to twelve: **GINGER PYE.** Eleanor Estes. Harcourt.

Older boys and girls: AMERICANS BEFORE COLUMBUS. Elizabeth Baity. Viking.

Here again arise disagreement and surprises over the judges' selections as to the best children's book published each year in the spring. As Jean Colby puts it: "What happens occasionally baffles 'the trade'—that charming and variable quality, human nature again—and one never knows what will happen."⁶

It seems the selection of *Sunshine* by Ludwig Bemelmans for the Picture book age in 1950 surprised a great many, including the publishers, Simon & Schuster, who had not even published it as a child's book. Critics say the pictures and humor may attract a child, but the story is definitely adult.

The newest award established in 1950 for a "worthy contribution to children's literature," as the medal states, is the Charles W. Follett Award of \$3000 and a gold medal. Wilcox & Follett publishes the book and Esther K. Meeks, their children's book editor, is one of the judges along with three others selected each year.

Its purpose, as given in a brochure, is to stimulate more interest in literature for children among established authors and to discover new writers. The subject may be fiction or non-fiction written for children between the ages of eight and sixteen. The manuscript is judged on these points: (1) interesting vital content; (2) significance of the theme; (3) emotional appeal; (4) quality of writing; (5) excellence of characterization; (6) durability—will it stand

⁶Colby, *op. cit.*, 3.

the test of time?; (7) plus values—educational, humorous, spiritual, uplifting.

The winners thus far are:

1950 JOHNNY TEXAS. Carol Huff.
1951 ALL-OF-A-KIND FAMILY. Sidney Taylor.

An award which has exerted considerable influence in the juvenile field is the Julia Ellsworth Ford Award, established in 1934 for the encouragement of better literature for children, but it has been temporarily discontinued, according to Gertrude Blumenthal, Children's Book Editor of Julian Messner, Inc. There was no limitation as to type, length, or age-level. The amount varied from \$1200 given at first to \$2000 given from 1937-1942, and since then, \$1250. Julian Messner published the manuscript, and their children's book editor was director of the foundation. The last winner was in 1950 to Chester Bryant for *The Lost Kingdom*.

Two other awards worthy of mention are those given by the Child Study Association of America and Boy's Club of America. The Child Study Association began in 1943 to give annually an honorary award for the most challenging book which deals realistically with problems in the child's world. The 1951 winner is *Partners: the United Nations and Youth* by Eleanor Roosevelt and Helen Ferris. Boy's Club of America in 1947 established Junior Book Award Medals to be given for five or more books published the past year which had received the highest recommendations from club members throughout the country. The winners are announced each year during Boy's Club

(Continued on Page 491)

Let Poetry Sing

RUTH R. RENDER¹

What happens between the primary grades and junior high? At seven and eight, boys and girls are bubbling over with a love of poetry. They are so full of promise, so thrilled with experiences in pleasurable communication, and so imbued with a true love of poetry that one would think the foundations could never be shaken. But we see our work wrecked.

Junior high school teachers tell me that by the time pupils reach them, the pleasure has given place to indifference or more often to active distaste. As one boy said, "We don't want that pretty bird and flower stuff." And girls say, "Do we have to learn poems?"

These are the same children. Their enjoyment of poetry should have grown along with them. What are teachers doing? Why have negative attitudes developed? No one thinks that band instruments are sissy, or that wood-working is effeminate, but somewhere the conviction has been born (and bred?) that all poetry belongs in the one damning category.

Teachers are still shredding poetry to pieces with thorough analysis. This is death to lyric verse, which is meant to be one quick flash of emotion in song. That there is a practice of memorization is obvious. Selections are based on their appeal to the teacher, are usually long, and memorization is forced. Hence, poetry becomes a painful task rather than an enjoyable, glorious experience. Poems need to be of varied types and subjects. Too much nature poetry has given the idea

that all poetic emotion stems from scenery (never science). We may rest assured that if poetry is enjoyed, it will be learned; otherwise, the learning is not permanent and the goal futile. Teaching memorization so as to alight upon a grade for the grade book is killing poetry. Another killing frost is the class discussion of all poems read. How many teachers give children an opportunity to discard what they do not like or to relish privately what they enjoy?

Poetry should be taught, and taught well, all through the grades, so that when a child leaves the elementary school he has been given the storehouse of wealth to which he is entitled. A large share of the world's finest expression has been in the English language, and we are not preparing boys and girls to find pleasure in the richness of this heritage throughout their adult years. In the words of John Dewey, "We need to use this medium to enlarge the range of purely immediate experience and give it deepened as well as wider meaning."²

How can we do this? Let's do more listening to poetry. It is, as May Hill Arbuthnot reminds us, an *aural* activity.³ The sound of melody, rhyme, and rhythm will help develop understanding. Let analysis wait for advanced courses. One of the

¹Primary teacher, Ottawa, Illinois. Written at Northern Illinois State Teachers College.

²In *Democracy and Education*, P. 272.

³Lecture, "Poetry," University of Chicago Reading Conference, 1949.

aims, now, is participation, which comes with enjoyable listening.

Poetry need not be obscure and difficult. Careful choice will prevent trouble. Suit degree of simplicity and interest of subject to the children. It is good when poetry comes as an outgrowth of some absorbing class activity, such as a trip, an assembly program, something brought to school by a pupil, or social studies and other class interests. Sometimes poetry may be used to arouse an interest.

In first and second grades we have some favorites that prove bell-ringers year after year. *Mrs. Peck-Pigeon* (by Eleanor Farjeon) is a familiar figure in our city, and we watch now for the "Bob-bob-bob" and the "little red feet." If some of us incidentally learn a distinction between *i* and *e* vowel sounds, we are glad; but this is never the aim. At Christmas time we use the old carol, *The Friendly Beasts*, for choral speaking, with solos for the various animals. And how we share with those humble animals the reverence and adoration of that first Eve! In snowy weather we like Annette Wynne's *Outside the Door*. It is brief, and we can say it ourselves after a few hearings. That achievement, all uncalled for, gives a great lift. *Shore Song* by Elizabeth Coatsworth helps us notice how the gulls over our river fish for their food. Poems like *The Barnyard* by Dorothy Aldis, *Three Little Witches* (so easily dramatized) by Marjorie Barrows, and *Mice* by Rose Fyleman are also good for lower grades.

In third and fourth grades we can take the imaginative poems, those describing everyday fun, or the out-of-door subjects.

We can use such poems as: *Goody O'Grumpity*, *The Naughty Kittens*, *Silver*, *The Woodpecker*, *The Snowman*, *The Pasture Spring*.

By the time we are in fifth and sixth grades, we prefer something like *Darius Green*, *Casey at the Bat*, or *The One-Hoss Shay*. It is time now to stress the narrative. Choral reading may be a help.

In seventh or eighth grade we can touch the easiest of classical literature, never losing touch, however, with the moderns. Both are needed to insure appeal. Use Browning's *How They Brought the Good News* and *The Pied Piper* (a good shadow play or puppet show), Carl Sandburg's *Fog* and *Chicago*, and (for choral reading) Mildred Plew Merryman's *Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee*.

Fun with poetry need not be limited to listening or to participating orally. With a little guidance — and the lighter the guiding hand the better — we can create. The first efforts will be clumsy and unrewarding. Practice is needed. If the atmosphere is characterized by good humor and relaxation, something good will grow. There is a huge thrill in attaining success and recognition, as well as in achievement. For some children there is distinct therapeutic value in written expression. What matter, in the face of these values, if the form is a bit crude or the techniques of language poor? Let's get something said. Love of the craft will develop a pride in craftsmanship.

We began with a class symposium. It is easy and quick; many can help; we get the feel of poetry-making; and success is sure. One of ours was:

What is a star like?
 I do not know.
 But when our baby smiles
 His eyes are bright,
 My father's wink
 Is so much fun.
 And the lights in my mother's diamond
 Jump out at me,
 When she turns her hand.
 I think a star must be like that.

Soon someone will bring from home
 the decree that poetry must rhyme. We
 try a little rhyming, but the results are
 seldom spontaneous and lofty and are less
 rhythmical. That should come later. One
 of our freest was:

When baby leaves
 Come out in spring
 It makes me want to play and sing.
 Even when I run
 And fall
 I don't go in the house at all.
 And when the sky
 Just has to rain
 I press against the window pane.

Delicacy of feeling is not easy to ex-
 press. The results are better if we do not
 strain for delicacy, as this one bears wit-
 ness:

I like tools.
 They are hard and noisy.
 I like the handles.
 They fit my hand.
 When I get home
 I will find a hammer

And nails and a saw,
 And I'll need some boards
 To build me a boat.

The fun of observing things more
 closely than usual is plainly told here:

When I touch a peach
 It is soft
 And furry.
 When I bite inside
 It is sweet and juicy
 And runny, too.
 And the funny pit
 Is so wrinkled and holey
 I have to laugh
 When I throw it away.

* We can write like this in second grade. Our efforts could grow into something worthwhile. We are fledglings now, not unlike the common meadow lark; for we soar up from the ground only a little way it is true, there to pipe a short little tune, telling, to those who will hear, the joy we feel in being "we who flutes whi-istle." Our song is crude. It is a beginning only. But it does not lack beauty, and it holds a thrill. Give us time and opportunity, perhaps a little assistance. Then we can make music with greater meaning, with more polish, and of higher splendor. Why rob us of joy or of its expression? "We who flutes whi-istle" beg you neither to throttle our voices nor to deafen our ears to the songs of others.

Cooperative Living In The Classroom

SEMA WILLIAMS HERMAN¹

In readying forty Johns and Sallys to function as good citizens in a democracy, it is important to remember that each comes from a small family unit in which everyone is considered "special" or "super-special" and is accorded the acceptance, affection, attention, and a chance of achievement on that basis. For this reason all pupils present a problem of immediate adjustment to the teacher, their classmates, and school living in preparation for future readjustments that will characterize their maturation and emergence as harmonious and productive members of a group.

Of the many ways of helping our Johns and Sallys to feel "helping" and secure, a statement of admiration concerning their attractive appearance, and one establishing status (that all are "smart") because of chronological age or grade placement, factors which they have achieved have been successful with young children. Provision of opportunities for every pupil to taste the wine of leadership, through "lucky" days when the "lucky" child assumes responsibility for opening exercises, dismissals, selection of games, songs, running of errands, and the like, and encouragement of individuals to do

nate or distribute prizes (candy, cookies, etc.) for progressive efforts, or to "surprise treat" the class before sessions begin, are prestige getting devices that have been enthusiastically received.²

Introduction of a social goal, that of being a "Good Neighbor," the planning of a wide range of activities enabling pupils to attain it through cooperation, will bring into focus the four "R's" of harmonious living—Recognition, Relationship, Responsibility, and Respect. For the purpose of focusing attention on the practical values of these in satisfying each child's needs as leader and participant a Social Achievement Chart, labeled, WE ARE GOOD HELPERS, may be developed. This records after every individual name, the skill or skills in which the youngster estimates himself proficient enough to aid others. Colorful symbols such as a book, denoting reading ability, a pencil denoting writing, etc., will help pupil interpretation when they refer to the chart for assurance as well as for aid. To avoid competition the same number of credits should be allotted to all pupils, and for the purpose of clarity, not more than two given.

As a rule youngsters are fairly accurate

¹Member of the Council's Committee On Participation And Leadership. This article is the result of experimental teaching with classes numbering forty or over forty children, and aims at offering solutions to situations encountered with such groups in crowded and highly competitive communities. However, the aids suggested may be used with smaller groups anywhere.

City children often buy "Buttons," which are small drops of colored candy dropped on a long sheet of narrow paper and sell at one cent. Others have brought popped corn, or potato chips and distributed one to each individual. Some have broken up home made cookies. Being included in the treat, not the size of it, brought status; donation offered status to the giver.

in estimating their proficiencies. However, should cases arise wherein pupils specify skills in which they do not excel, credit should be temporarily allowed and the individual permitted to help by way of labor (distribution of material, etc.), much in the same way as adults achieve distinction through organizational work or donation who can not attain it through talent. After an interval of several weeks, a new estimate should be taken and correction made. Referring John and Sally to the chart to select their own reading, writing, singing, drawing, or other helpers when aid is needed, will encourage feelings of friendly relationships, as well as status, in choosers and chosen. The teacher may help such social recognition along by calling the roll each morning before class work begins, in the following way: "Who are the wonderful children that will help us write better, today?", and asking for response by raising of hands. By enumeration of the entire roster of "helpers," identification of such will be aided, and since every one helps in some way, will give assurance to each as a person of worth.

Credits for participation in social welfare follow the record of individual ability on the same sheet, with one star per week given to those proving their "good neighborliness" in any one of the activities listed below.

A. Contributions Made To Individual Welfare. (Supplies, Services)

1. Helping on or off with clothing.
2. Loaning materials
3. Helping to improve skills of others
4. Giving information, advice.

B. Contributions To Community Welfare. (Supplies, Services)

1. Donating materials to serve the needs of the class community, such as paper, pencils, crayons, paste, loaning books to the class library.
2. Beautifying the classroom. Donating colorful clippings from newspaper or magazine
Donating own drawings made voluntarily on own time
Loaning plants or other articles for purposes of study or exhibit
Keeping the classroom neat and orderly.
3. Donating or distributing food or favors at a party or as a class treat.
4. Contributing talent to entertain or instruct others.

Since the least intelligent, least talented, least affluent, may find in this range one opportunity for successful contribution, the amount of stars accorded runs fairly even for the entire class personnel. At the semester's end children receive in a form meaningful to them a record of their citizenship as the chart is cut apart and individual strips handed out.

However, status-giving alone will not eliminate the possibility of competition and friction, for many pupils bring a variety of insecurities from home which are not apparent at first. Fears and anxieties may breed or revive prejudices that will disrupt the cooperative program, and it is wise to avoid situations which produce such, and to weed out the most common trepidations while class relationships are studied to eliminate others as they come to the surface.

Apprehension of the teacher, sometimes motivated by the home, may be negated by personal interest and gestures of affection, while anxieties stemming from inability to meet her standards or those of the group are ruled out by inclusion in a slow working class and adjustment of curricula to the individual's rate of progress so that visible achievement is possible each day. Stimulating public interest in pupil gains, and encouraging public reward for these are other solutions.

Fear of learning situations, sometimes involving new techniques,³ may be ameliorated by forecasting such a short interval before actual presentation is made, as a step related to an activity certain to appeal to children, as a reward for goals already attained, or as an indication of pupil progress ("smart work for smart children"). Allowing youngsters to work at a new project together has been found helpful in lending assurance.

Anxieties arising from inability to make an adequate contribution can be minimized by pairing peers and manoeuvring the situation so that each aids the other at his own level in a cooperative project, and praising both participants and result. Covering up grass and flowers in a class frieze once led to the appreciation of the achievement of children least proficient in art and played an important role in establishing friendliness and cohesion.

Encouraging recognition of fine qualities possessed by the less affluent, the unattractive, the foreign born, the ethnic

³Learning difficult spelling words for the purpose of making a story or spelling book; for writing a letter to parents; number addition in order to shop in the class store, modelling animals for the purpose of class circus.

variant, and finding opportunities for the public use of such in filling a group need, will stimulate good relationships and eliminate exclusion and discrimination. The sharing of common tasks in which individuals depend upon each other's skills and cooperation for success will establish rapprochement on a personal basis, and enlisting the alchemy of social recognition as suggested in the paragraph above will facilitate class acceptance.

A program of group singing and choral speaking to insure parental attendance, given as early in the semester as possible, will afford a good occasion for explanation of the variation in mental growth and the relation of the home in accelerating or retarding individual progress. This event, followed by conferences during the year, is the best solution to fear of failure to meet standards set by parents that plagues many youngsters in today's classrooms.

In some communities resentment provoked by seating can be avoided by allowing pupils to keep those taken by chance on the day school convenes, and obtaining the good will of all parties concerned before any alteration is made.

Group division may be explained as the result of the impossibility of instructing so many children at one time. Emphasis on social instead of scholastic achievements, and the interesting of individuals in their own progress and the relationship of such to that of their neighbors as a means of attaining social recognition will eliminate insecurities sometimes resulting from these partitions.

Frustrations caused by classification

for voice training will not enter the schoolroom where "singers" (positives and upper negatives) have a chance to "shine" during the music period as "music helpers," while "speakers" (lower negatives and monotones), assume prominence in recitation of poetry during the English period. The very lowest voices may function as announcers.

Enabling pupils to comprehend their school environment and the reasons for its rules, aiding them to understand behavior patterns of their neighbors and giving them cues to adjust to these, clarifying the learning process as one of continual growth in which error is a necessary and common factor, leading them to conclude that success in any situation depends upon friendly rapprochements between neighbors, will promote wholesome habits of living in which insecurities will not readily flourish. For in a democratic schoolroom, social goals, the building of a stable and understanding character that can meet the challenge of new personalities and situations and adjust to these to his own satisfaction, so that self-esteem is not impaired, and security in his particular environment is intact, must supersede as far as the child is concerned scholastic achievements.

Finally, the Johns and Sallys and Bettys and Jims, the wide country over, who are expected to value and make good use of their freedom as adults should be granted that privilege as children. Free-

dom to thrive and mature as persons of special talents that are appreciated and encouraged in class relationships, freedom to vary in development of physical and mental powers without stigma, to err without fear of ridicule or reprisal from one's fellows, one's peers, one's elders, freedom to learn at first hand that cooperative living affords the sweetness of leadership and the warmth of participation, these are the birthrights of children in a democracy that must be accorded in school, home, and community and considered basic in any curriculum which aims at bringing up an understanding, productive and unified citizenry.

NOTE:

Recent aids created by the writer to facilitate understanding in a form appealing to children follow.

SONGS

"Let's Be Friendly"—*American Junior Red Cross News*, February, 1951.

"We Need Our Neighbors"—*American Childhood*, March, 1951.

"Good Morning, Neighbor"—*American Childhood*, April, 1950.

POEMS

"This, My Promise"—*American Junior Red Cross Journal*, February, 1950.

"A Happy Way To Live"—*American Childhood*, December, 1951.

PLAY

"Elizabeth Learns A Lesson," a socio-drama. *American Childhood*, April, 1951.

Elementary School Journalism

RUTH CRAIG CORMACK¹

Sixteen eighth grade children of the Oakdale Union Grammar School have had the unique experience of editing one issue of the *Oakdale Leader*, a weekly newspaper. Two real life experiences preceded the newspaper editing.

During the past six years, Stanley Wakefield, editor and co-owner of the *Oakdale Leader*, has given us space for a grammar school news column. Some three dozen children throughout each year have had the satisfaction of seeing their news items printed above their signatures.

Annually this editor has talked with the seventh and eighth grade classes, some 270 children. It has been impressive to have a "real, live" editor talk on the rules of writing, and it has been an excellent learning situation for language and grammar work. He has used illustrations and amusing anecdotes from his paper to show the children the "why" of language rules. He presented the five W's as the framework around which to construct successful news stories. If two or three of the W's, the who, what, when, where, and why quintet, are used in the first sentence or paragraph, the result would have interest-catching value. News writing must also be checked for accuracy in names, dates, spelling, and punctuation, as well as for legible penmanship. After the editor's talks the children's notes were made into outlines for their own use and reference.

The editor's comments have obviated any necessity on the English teacher's part for continuous drill on construction of stories, paragraphs, and even of gram-

matical sentences. Drill on parts of speech, phrases, clauses, and objects was seen to be a means to an end. Facility in these usages was understood to be as necessary as the memorization of rules for adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing in arithmetic. Each, in its field, is a requisite component of successful problem solving.

These classes have had a real life experience which challenges them to do successful writing, with the added incentive that a careful writer will be rewarded by being chosen to edit the news column for a few weeks.

Quality and accuracy in all written work has improved tremendously on all levels of ability. In their biographical sketches, autobiographies, and essays, interest has been stimulated not only to have something interesting to say but to communicate it to others so that a reader will be interested. The children have found it natural to compose interesting introductory sentences, discuss one item at a time in connected paragraphs, and finish with a summarizing sentence.

At the close of his talk this year, the editor was so impressed by the youngsters' keen questions and alert attitude that he astounded the faculty by asking whether sixteen children would like to edit one issue of the *The Oakdale Leader*. The response was most enthusiastic. We were finally able to agree on the date of March fifteenth for this unique experience.

Some three weeks before that date the

¹Teacher of English, Oakdale Union Grammar School, Oakdale, California.

sixteen had been chosen by a little competition, and each had brought written permission from his parents to be an editor. Fifty candidates submitted folders of newsclippings and original writings of the type in which they were interested. It was necessary to be a little ruthless in dropping those whose spelling was careless, whose handwriting was not too legible, or whose grammatical construction was faulty. Each folder received a comment as to why it was acceptable or unacceptable. Five faculty members then took the surviving twenty-four booklets and checked sixteen which they liked the best. There were just sixteen which received either all five faculty checks, or four or three of them.

Two weeks before March fifteenth, the lucky sixteen visited the newspaper office assignments for interviews, stories, and office duties for incoming news. Back at school, enthusiasm, excitement, and interest ran high as several went for interviews with prominent citizens, attended civic and social dinner and club meetings, and viewed the local and out of town basketball tournaments. During school time these reporters wrote and signed their stories from their copious notes. In proofreading their finished products it was gratifying to find that few needed rewriting because of spelling, grammatical construction, or illegibility. We compiled some two dozen articles covering general news, features stories, sports, society items, and editorials. The editor told us afterwards that he left out a half page ad, just to get more of our work into that edition.

On the last three days before the fifteenth, from four to six pupils worked in

the news office each day, writing up news that came in by phone or person. A different group worked each day, and one boy typed all one day.

For the teacher it was a busy week of proof-reading, teaching regular classes, and worrying over those working at the office. But the satisfaction, amazement, and pride with which editor, teacher, and embryo editors viewed the final results more than repaid us all. The reading public's remarks on it were most gratifying.

Stanley Wakefield commented editorially on the experience. Under "It's Been Fun," he says: "There's little doubt that this particular issue of the *Leader* is the best, the most refreshing and most interesting, from the reader's standpoint, that has ever been issued. The same goes from the producer's standpoint....

"This assignment of stories really developed some interesting news and undoubtedly achieved the most representative coverage of news ever attempted....

"We wouldn't be surprised if out of the experience this week, a regular writer or two, for pay, will be hired from among the youngsters. (Two pupils have already been hired.)

"It's hard to tell whether the newspaper staff or the youngsters had the most fun this week. Stories were written amid giggles, conferences, questions, much use of the dictionary, and a minimum of blue penciling by the regular editorial staff.

"Instead of being a chore, it has proven a delightful experience. Thanks, 'kids,' for a swell job and the splendid and complete co-operation you all gave during your week of practical journalism."

(Continued on Page 487)

Painting Pictures with Words

PANSY PARKER¹

Children's Love of Poetry

Children love poetry if the teacher selects poems wisely and presents them interestingly. They enjoy hearing poems while they escape the everyday world and establish themselves as kings of glorious spheres in far away mystical lands. They enjoy listening to poems which repeat in sing-song rhythm the plain little happenings of every day.

Poetry helps a child to interpret experiences. If he lives in an environment rich in opportunities to be imaginative, to create, to observe, to wonder, to talk freely and to explore, he will develop greater language skills or power.

"I'm going down to the shouting sea," cried Peggy as she jumped into the sandbox on the playground. She had just come from listening with other first-graders to "Sand-Between-the Toes," with its account of the joys that are Christopher Robin's "whenever a good nor'wester blows."

"Running in the halls is a very great bother," said Jackie with a twinkle in his eye, as the rushing lines of children are stopped. He was quoting from James S. Tippett's "Sh", which always brought chuckles from this group of children who lived in crowded city apartment houses.

"Please, may I own that one?" asks Susan as the teacher finishes reading "Falling Leaves." A slip with Susan's name was placed in the book; from that time on, "Falling Leaves" was called Susan's poem. Each child was given the opportunity to

choose one poem for a room list, "Poems We Like Best."

"What poems would you like to hear today?" inquires the teacher at the beginning of a poetry-sharing period.

- "Read 'General Store'!"
- "Read 'Little Dutch Clock'!"
- "Animal Crackers'!"
- "The Raggedy Man!"
- "Shop Windows!"
- "Let's say 'The Cupboard'!"

The requests went on and on. All of this is evidence of the fact that the sharing of poetry has become a pleasurable and significant experience for the boys and girls in this first grade. Enjoyment contributes to the realization of experience. Unless the reading of a selection is enjoyed in class, the child is not likely to read it in leisure-time.

Poetry is an important means of helping the child acquire those steadfast values that are a sound basis for interpreting his world. "Don't Give Up" by Phoebe Cary may serve to deepen and develop courage: "Gossip" by Lexie Dean-Robertson may serve as a rebuke to thoughtless cruelty.

It is a fine thing for a teacher to have memorized much poetry so that it may be used to fit an occasion as it arises. If Eddie comes into the school-room wearing new shoes, the teacher may recite "Choosing Shoes" by Efrida Wolfe especially for

¹A graduate student in the School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. This paper was written in the class of Professor Mary E. Coleman.

Eddie. If Nancy arrives at school filled with excitement and pride over the arrival of a new baby brother or sister, the teacher may say especially for Nancy, the poem, "Little" by Dorothy Aldis.

Children's joy in poetry thus related to their everyday experiences will well repay the teacher for time spent in acquiring a rich background of memorized lines.

Methods of Teaching Poetry

There is really no one best way to teach a poem. The method followed one day may not do on the next; no two classes respond exactly alike to the same poem presented in the same way. One cannot hope to teach poetry successfully merely by relying upon a prearranged outline or plan which proved its worth on some former occasion.

The method arises out of the situation, the surroundings, and the experiences of the children, also the materials on hand. The oftener a child hears a poem, the better he will like it, with a few exceptions.

The teaching of poetry makes constant demands upon the interpretative and creative powers of the instructor. The objectives to be sought are fixed, and the method which must be followed will, in its broader outline, be more or less uniform. But the teacher must sense the dominant element in the poem and find the way which will best enable her to bring it to the attention of this class on this day. She must also see to it that her method is in harmony with the particular poem which is being taught, with the capabilities and interest of the class, and with many other factors which can act to alter the situation.

The love of poetry cannot be drilled into pupils; it must be cultivated. Threats and coaxings designed to help children acquire appreciation and enjoyment of poetry through exercise of sheer will power, will bring little success.

The approach to a poem may mean its success or failure with the class. Introducing a poem in a way that will arouse interest and curiosity often serves to help a child see the beauty and significance portrayed by the poet. This interest may be aroused by a sketch of the poet's personality, or an anecdote concerning the poem; it may consist in correlating the poem with another study, or with an incident which has taken place outside or within the classroom.

Poetry is to be read aloud so that one may be able to get the feel of the poet's mood and rhythm. "Nobody has ever read a poem until he has read it with his own voice for the pleasure of his own ears."² From oral reading which the teacher does, the child listeners must be able to get the "unified whole"—the melody, ideas, pattern, mood—since the chief purposes of reading poetry orally, beyond sheer enjoyment, are increased clarification of the poet's thinking and the communication of his moods and ideas to others.

Selection and Presentation of Children's Poetry

Selection. Wise selection of children's poetry should be the watchword of every teacher. The importance of both literary merit and appeal to children's interests as criteria for the selection of materials, is

²Marguerite Wilkinson, "New Voices," *Elementary English Review*, XXV (November, 1948), 11.

generally accepted. However, failure to meet these criteria results in children's spending much time with the mediocre and the dull.

The unfortunate outcome is aptly illustrated by what has happened in the field of humorous poetry. Because limericks seem amusing, altho much of their humor is on a level with that of the "funnies," the literature programs are becoming increasingly cluttered with verses that are not poetry but mere rime, and, in many cases, only doggerel.

Humorous poetry rightly receives a considerable proportion of the poetry time allotment because the child gives as his foremost reason for liking poetry, "I like it because it is funny." Humorous poetry serves an important function in developing a liking and an appreciation for poetry, but the humor should be that of poems of recognized merit. It should be poems that will help in the development of discriminative reading tastes. Broad experience with many types of poetry is needed.

Poems literally sing themselves into a child's fancy. The season, the background of interest, the age, the personality of the group and its ideas should determine the choice of poems.

Little people have not experienced enough of life to be thoughtful about it and interpret it with figurative language, but they do enjoy poems about children, people, and animals. A sense of humor appeals to them consistently. A poem with pattern, word rhyme, and rhythm expresses the emotions and ideas of a group in many different ways.

Presentation. Wise selection of ma-

terials must be complemented by proper methods of presentation if the child is to enjoy poetry.

If poetry is to become a part of the children and not merely a distasteful task it must be presented in a way that will arouse their interest. Some suggestions include the following:

1. Create "readiness to listen" by an introduction that stimulates interest and develops necessary background. It need be only a sentence or two. For example, "The Spirit of the Birch" by Arthur Ketchum was much enjoyed by one group of sixth grade children when introduced with a brief retelling of the myth that explains how the dryads were imprisoned in trees. The explanation was followed by the question, "If you were to choose a tree so graceful, so beautiful that it seemed it might imprison a dryad, what tree would you choose?" After various trees had been suggested by the pupils, the teacher continued, "this is the tree that one poet imagined might be the home of a dryad," and read aloud: "I am the dancer of the wood . . ."

2. Read the poem aloud to the children. Few children read poetry well enough to bring out the music. Reread the poem several times, having the children listen for a different purpose each time.

3. Ask only questions that seem essential to the realization of experience. If there is discussion, it should be largely voluntary. Many of the poems which rank highest in children's preference seem to require no other teaching procedure than a sincere reading by one who enjoys poetry.

4. Make it possible for the children

to hear the poem at a later time and to read it for themselves if they care to do so. Lists of poems that have been read in class and enjoyed by children may be written on the blackboard and the question asked, "Would you like to hear some of these poems again?" Soon all the poems on the list will be requested. Also, provide for frequent periods in which children read their favorite poems aloud. Many of those to which they have listened will be chosen for rereading.

5. Place on the free-reading table or the classroom shelves volumes of poetry by well known authors of children's poetry. Also place there fine anthologies such as *An Inheritance of Poetry*, *My Poetry Book, Sung Under the Silver Umbrella*, *Silver Pennies*, *This Singing World*, and many others.

6. Grouping poetry about a general topic is a device that adds interest. This may be accomplished in many ways:

A. By grouping poems about a theme such as "Jolly Good Times" of "America Moves West." There are poems to fit almost any desired topic. If "Pictures of People" is the theme, one may read "Jonathan

Jo" by A. A. Mine, "Tired Tim" and Miss T" by Walter De La Mare, "The Child Next Door" by Rose Fyleman, and others.

B. By utilizing the current weather, season, month, or holiday as the basis for organization. If it is raining, read poems about rain such as "Rain in the Night" by Amelia Josephine Burr, "Mud" by Polly Chase Boyden and "City Rain" by Rachel Field. If the first snow of the season is falling, read "A Winter Rune" by Elizabeth Coatsworth and follow it with "Velvet Shoes" by Elinor Wylie.

C. By presenting the poetry of one author, one country, or one people. For example, read poetry by Negro poets, poetry by southern and northern authors, or poetry of English, French, German, and others, or poetry of Indians that help paint pictures of life, activities and beliefs.

To be able to carry boys and girls thru the seasons in verse that they enjoy is to give them a precious gift—the gift to interpret experiences with colorful meaning and as means of helping the child acquire those steadfast values that are a sound basis for interpreting his world.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNALISM

(Continued from Page 488)

From an English education viewpoint this practical experience in the field of journalism has been a perfect example of our modern theory of education, which necessarily requires drill work in basic

principles, made interesting and vital by use in real life situations. Also, the gifted child has been benefited with an enriched curriculum for his additional growth.

Look and Listen

Edited by RAOUL R. HAAS¹

The accent will be on television and its use in home and school at the 15th Annual Meeting of the School Broadcast Conference to be held at the Sherman Hotel in Chicago, December 4-6, 1951. Featuring nationally known speakers, demonstrations of techniques, exhibits of new classroom equipment and of student work, the meetings will consider radio, television, recordings, and other electronic aids in the classroom.

A film which promises to be of special interest to teachers of English will be given its premiere screening at the Conference. Produced by Walter Kingson of the Theatre Arts Department at the University of California in Los Angeles, *Four Ways to Drama* is a comparative treatment of radio, legitimate theatre, motion picture, and television. Several films produced by the Bureau of Instructional Materials, Division of Radio, the Chicago Public Schools, for use on television will also be screened.

The use of radio in the classroom will continue to receive major emphasis at the Conference. *Mr. Wizard*, a popular educational program, will be broadcast from the conference floor. An afternoon-long demonstration of the use of the tape recorder in English, music, social studies, and science classes is promised.

● Teachers are in favor of bringing television into the classroom as an educational tool, it was disclosed in a study conducted at the University of Cincinnati, Dr. Raymond Walters, president, announced recently.

The University of Cincinnati scholarship study, provided by a grant of the Crosley Broadcasting Corporation, was made by Russell Helmick, principal-on-leave from Holmes High School, Covington, Kentucky.

¹Mr. Haas is Director the North Side Branch, Chicago Teachers College.

Helmick's study, conducted over a period of months, was a survey of the opinions and attitudes of teachers and educators in the Cincinnati area towards the potential uses of television in relation to education. Helmick arrived at conclusions and recommendations of his study by interviews with 694 educators.

As a preliminary step to submitting the questionnaire to educators, "in-school" television programs were telecast to a selected group of educators to get their reaction to the actual use of television as a teaching tool.

Titled "Look-Learning," four programs were telecast on different days to a selected audience of teachers and pupils in 14 schools. The programs were designed to demonstrate the different uses which could be made of television as a teaching aid. The programs were planned to get authentic educator reaction to the actual use of television as a teaching tool.

A general summarization of educator reaction to the 17 questions forming the study reveals that 92 per cent of those questioned feel there is a place in the educational program for television programs designed for school use. Other findings of the study reveal that:

1. Current events leads the list of subjects which can best be supplemented by television programs. To the question, "Do you believe that TV programs should be planned to supplement instruction in the following subjects?" 74% responded yes to current issues on the national level; 9% perhaps; and 2% no. On the local level, 69% responded yes; 12% perhaps; and 3% no.

2. Television will be more widely used than radio as an educational tool was the conclusion of 60% of educators questioned, although only 20% of those questioned thought television

would be more widely used than film projection as a supplementary teaching aid.

3. A majority of educators will be willing to assist in the planning of television-education programs; 82% of those questioned favor the placement of television sets in school to utilize fully a planned educational-television program.

4. The school budget should be used to purchase these television sets was the opinion of 79% of educators polled.

5. Programs ranging in length from 15 minutes to an hour per day were suggested by educators as the time in which an effective use of television as a supplementary teaching aid could be made.

6. The cost of television-education programs should be met, 58% responded, by restricted sponsorship by films and businesses offering recognized services and products. Ten per cent believed unlimited sponsorship would be desirable and 26% believed the station should assume the entire cost as a public service.

7. Special television programs directed to the parent and tax payer were favored by 84% of the 694 educators questioned, and 65% favored the televising of high school athletic events as a further means of bringing the school and its work closer to the public. In the televising of athletic events, 53% of the educator panel believed the school athletic association should receive some compensation for the privilege. Again, the majority of educators, 63%, believed that some form of restricted advertising would be permissible in the televising of an athletic event.

8. The educator panel found 74% of its number favoring an adjustment of class schedules to take advantage of the television-education programs. Only 21% of the educator panel favored any type of daily detailed instruction type television program, and only 42% favored a weekly program of the same type. However,

a television program of a weekly supplementary instruction type was favorable to 84% of the panel.

Certain recommendations are made by Helmick in evaluating the results of his study. Because there is a manifest desire on both the part of the educator and television industry to use the medium to the best advantage in providing supplementary material for education, a program development on broad content should be implemented. Also, a long period of experimentation will be required before television can become a vital factor in educational planning. He recommends the elementary school, where there is less subject emphasis and a more pupil-centered curriculum, as the appropriate place for the experimentation.

High on the list of recommendations stemming from Helmick's study is the formation of an education-television council. The council, composed of teachers, parents, pupils, and representatives of the television industry, would study the chief educational needs of children that can best be supplied by television.

Since most educators tend to be conservative, Helmick points out, a continuing effort should be made to acquaint teachers with television. To make television more flexible in its educational use, existing educational films should be pooled for telecasting. Such a film pool would be especially welcome to the smaller school systems.

Helmick's final recommendation is concerned with the cost of television-education programming. Since educators are not certain as to the character of advertising which might be used to pay the cost, Helmick recommends that a program of research be set up not only to determine what type of advertising would be acceptable, but also to examine other means of financing the television-education programs.

● The National Television Review Board, first of its kind in the United States, was established in May, 1950, under the auspices of TV

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

Forecast Magazine as the citizen's answer to government control of television programming. The board is composed of leading citizens in all walks of life, businessmen, the clergy, sports leaders, outstanding club workers, and family men. It is not a board of censorship; it does not have authority to stop shows.

The prime purposes of the board are:

1. To view current shows, rate them, and make recommendations to families owning sets.
2. To issue reports of findings to program managers, sponsors and agencies nationwide.

Interested readers may write directly to the Board at 185 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago 1, for complete copies of recommended shows. In addition, *TV Forecast Magazine* publishes the board's findings each month in a regular issue.

● An explorer's-eye-view of the world-at-large is being color televised in a new weekly series of adventure and exotic entertainment. Called "New Horizons," the program had its premiere, with Ivan Sanderson as host, recently (CBS-TV, 10:00-10:30 p.m., EST).

Sanderson will spotlight one of the world's great countries each week, taking viewers in time from the snow-lashed Arctic wastes to the steaming jungles of the tropics. The series will probe the endless wonders of the world in the gay, light-hearted manner characteristic of this noted world traveler, author, lecturer, and naturalist.

The series will be a blend of novelty and realism, with Sanderson eschewing, in particular, historic edifices, places where Queen Elizabeth allegedly slept, fake voodoo dances and the familiar "hokum" of tourist entertainment. Sanderson delights in debunking popular misconceptions about other lands, other peoples and their customs, and the ways of wild animals as he explores the off-trail wonders of the world. Governments of the countries being

featured on "New Horizons" will cooperate in the production of the series.

● "Grandfather's Bookshelf," comprising still-living books from the last half of the 19th century, is the subject of informal discussion on "Invitation to Learning," which began on Sunday, October 7. (CBS Radio, 11:35-12:00 noon, EST.) The series will run through the rest of the year.

Dr. Lyman Bryson, who has been associated with the program since its start in 1940, will continue as chairman of the weekly discussions. Describing the series, Dr. George Crothers, producer, thinks back on a boyhood in southern Ohio and his grandfather's home there, and says: "My grandfather, as you can tell by this list of books that I remember seeing on his library shelves, was a man of catholic literary tastes. Grandfather could recite Homer and Virgil as well as the next man, and he knew most of the Psalms by heart. But he liked to keep abreast of the times, too. Perhaps he never read all the books he brought home. But those on this list had the pages cut and some of them had marks here and there on the margins, and some of the sentences were underlined in red ink."

The books on "Grandfather's Bookshelf" to be discussed in December are:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| November | 18—August Strindberg, <i>The Father</i> |
| | 25—Oliver Wendell Holmes, <i>The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table</i> |
| December | 2—Israel Zangwill, <i>Dreamers of the Ghetto</i> |
| | 9—Herbert Spencer, <i>First Principles</i> |
| | 16—Guy de Maupassant, <i>Short Stories</i> |
| | 23—Robert Browning, <i>The Ring and the Book</i> |
| | 30—George Meredith, <i>Diana of the Crossways</i> |

● A trio of experts will share the role of scientific "detectives" on a quiz panel dealing with the mysteries of anthropology, archeology, and allied fields with Dr. Froelich Rainey, director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, as moderator on the new weekly half-hour feature "What in the World?" (CBS-TV, 4:30-5:00 p.m., EST).

Originating in Philadelphia, where the program gained wide popularity when it was pre-

sented by WCAU-TV, "What in the World" each week will ask two permanent panelists and a guest to identify rare museum pieces from the University of Pennsylvania collection. Objects which the experts will be asked to explain may range in geographical origin from South America to Tibet; in age, from the prehistoric era to early modern times. In each case, panelists will be asked to provide the story of the object as well as identification.

CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS

(Continued from Page 474)

Week in April. The number has varied from six chosen in 1947 to nine in 1951, ten in 1950, and twelve in 1948.

After considering awards and trying to determine the wisdom of the selections, one comes to the fundamental conclusion that time tells the story here as elsewhere. Great books live. Those that are supposed

to be good but are not, disappear. In looking over the winners of the oldest award, the Newbery, one concludes that in most instances time has justified the wisdom of the choices and the committee did not go far astray in their selections. Only time can estimate the far-reaching influence of book awards in the field of children's literature.

HOW SUCCESSFUL IS READING INSTRUCTION?

(Continued from Page 457)

dividuals, (d) use of functional methods and materials in small classes, (e) wide application of visual aids, (f) hygiene conditions insuring a sense of security and well being, (g) provision for success from the start and for steady progress, and (h) the use of thoroughly trained enthusiastic instructors.

Under the above conditions, it became possible for functionally illiterate and non-English-speaking men to acquire the reading skills needed in the Army in the amazingly short period of eight weeks. A description of the steps in this accomplishment along with implications for the classroom teacher may be found elsewhere.²²

It is hoped that the coming years will

bring a widespread initiation of developmental reading programs throughout the elementary and the secondary schools. When such programs are widely established, improvement in reading will transpire.

²²Paul Witty and Samuel Goldberg, "The Army's Training Program for Illiterate Non-English-Speaking and Educationally Retarded Men," *The Elementary English Review* (December, 1943); Witty and Goldberg, "The Use of Visual Aids in the Army," *Journal of Educational Psychology* (February, 1944). See also Paul Witty and Golda Van Buskirk, "Beam in the Eye," *Childhood Education* (October, 1944) and "The Soldier Learns to Read," *The National Parent-Teacher* (February 1944). See also, Paul Witty, "The Conquest of Illiteracy," *School and Society* (July 7, 1945), and Paul Witty, "Some Suggestions for Vocabulary Development in Public Schools," *Educational Administration and Supervision* (May, 1945).

The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS¹

"The Second 'R'" by Frances A. Rosen in *Letter to Supervisors* (reprinted in the May *Education Digest*) points out that the flourishes and furbelows in handwriting are gone from our schools. But with them, unfortunately, have gone most standards of quality in handwriting instruction according to Miss Rosen. Modern aims are those of legibility, speed, and neatness. Like many other aims in education these aims are divorced from the means for attaining them. These, in essence, are some requirements for raising handwriting standards, writes Miss Rosen:

1. No overemphasis on excellence.
2. The teacher's quality and consistency of handwriting is important.
3. Readiness comes when the child sees "handwriting as a tool of expression—as something to serve his needs."
4. Generally, manuscript may be taught in the first grade and cursive writing in the third grade.
5. "The school that wants good results in handwriting will provide children with the necessary paper, pencils, and pens of sufficiently high quality to do an effective job of teaching." (This might include fountain pens, and pencils of various sizes).
6. Self-evaluation using the Ayres, Thorndike and similar scales, or against a folder of the pupil's former writing is effective.
7. "Best results will be forthcoming when the whole staff works together to help children write better."



The new 1951-52 edition of the *Annotated List of Books for Supplementary Reading* (Kg-Grade 9) has just been published by the Children's Reading Service of New York and is of-

fered without charge to any teacher, school librarian, or principal who requests it.

This new 96-page catalog, edited by Dorothy Cadwallader, presents a list of 1,000 children's books from over 40 publishers, arranged by topics and school grade levels. A special section is devoted to books suitable for remedial reading.

Copies of the new catalog and details about book exhibits may be obtained from the Children's Reading Service, 106 Beekman Street, New York 38.



The May issue of *Education* is the Reading Number. The issue may help teachers to assess their school's reading program. We cite two examples from the number:

(1) From article, "Curriculum: the Basis of Reading," by David H. Russell, the teacher might ask himself if his school has a modern reading program. He might find the answer by checking the four facets of the modern reading program as described by Dr. Russell:

1. The developmental reading program. This asks, 'What is Johnny doing in reading?'
2. The functional reading program. 'How is Johnny using reading?'
3. The recreational reading program. 'How is Johnny enjoying reading?'
4. The enrichment program for personal-social growth. 'What is reading doing to Johnny?'

(2) Teachers haunted by parents and children's questions and by doubts in their own minds about "Why Teach Them to Read?" may find the answer in the article by C. L. Cushman. Mr. Cushman finds the answer to this question 'John Deere Junior High School, Moline, Ill.

in the needs of democracy. The imperative needs for the development of individuality, the need for good workers, and the need for thinking citizens. In Mr. Cushman's words, "... Teach them to read that they may achieve that measure of independence of thought and action essential for meaningful individuality; teach them to read that they may become good workers of our democracy; teach them to read that we may have citizens competent to think and act about the basic issues of society."



The September 1951 issue of *Childhood Education* is devoted to the theme "Understanding What We Face." This timely number discusses the problems arising out of present domestic and world conditions, the on-going needs of children, and how children can achieve inner security and faith in the uncertain future. Individual articles, keyed to the idea that this is a time of crisis—one of danger with opportunity—discuss tensions between school and community, the nature of the modern world, critical areas as the child sees them, and the Association for Childhood Education International's plan of action for 1951-1953. Of especial interest to this column in the issue was a statement by Ralph J. Bunche, and one by a group of ten-year olds in the Glencoe, Ill. schools.



In a small booklet, "To Help Preadolescents Through an Important Stage in Their Growth," published by Scott, Foresman and Co., we found this list of actions and attitudes which, if consistently practiced by teachers, can go far toward assuring the mental health and emotional stability of the children in their classrooms. We should like to repeat the list here:

1. Give each child the security that comes from knowing that he is accepted as a person.
2. Remember that each child has his own characteristics and his own rate of development,

and avoid making comparisons among boys and girls.

3. Encourage independence and actively help the child master new skills—not just academic skills, but social and recreational as well.

4. Do everything possible to see that the child has satisfying friendships with others in his own group.

5. Provide opportunities for children to talk out their fears, their uncertainties, and their anxieties; help them discover safe and harmless outlets for their pent-up feelings.

6. Place less emphasis on competitive activities and more on cooperative ones.

7. Take time to discover the real motives and emotions underlying behavior, and deal with these rather than with the outward behavior alone. Remember that all behavior is caused, and try to seek out the causes.

This pamphlet is offered free to middle-grade teachers.

Scott, Foresman are also the publishers of a news service bulletin, "English High Lights," offered free upon request to English teachers. The publishers' address is 433 E. Erie Street, Chicago 11.



Teachers of children ten to fourteen who live in an area with a large Jewish population may find the new booklet *Your Neighbor Celebrates*, by Rabbi Irving Rosenbaum and Oscar Tarcov, invaluable. The booklet gives a concise explanation of eight Jewish holidays plus a discussion of the Sabbath.

Your Neighbor Celebrates may be ordered from the Anti-defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 327 So. LaSalle St., Chicago 4. Price ten cents per copy.



The Association for Childhood Education International announces that four leaflets of the

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

1945 *Portfolio for Kindergarten Teachers* have been reprinted with new bibliographies added; three have retained former titles but have been rewritten; one rewritten has a new title; four are completely new. The titles of the twelve leaflets are:

What to Expect of the Fours and Fives by Marie Belle Fowler

Kindergarten Housing and Furnishings by Mamie W. Heinz

A Good Day for the Four-Year-Olds by Nancy Nunnally

A Good Day for the Fives by Synva Nicol

The Kindergarten Program by Olga Adams

Beginning School by Mamie W. Heinz

Dramatic Play revised by Lenore Wilson

Kindergarten's Responsibility Toward Reading compiled by Elizabeth Neterer

Science and Nature Experiences for Young Children by Anna Eveleth Holman

Individual Records and Parent Conferences by Mamie W. Heinz

Home-School Relationships by Viretta C. Van Dorn

Music Experiences for the Fours and Fives compiled by Mamie W. Heinz

The twelve leaflets may be purchased for seventy-five cents or separately for ten cents each from the Association at 1200 Fifteenth Street N. W., Washington 5.



A recent issue in the *Education Briefs* series published by the U. S. Office of Education is "Characteristics of Seventh and Eighth Children and School Programs for Them" (No. 18). The 13-page pamphlet discusses the physical and social-emotional characteristics of this group, the concerns of adolescents and their endeavors to develop satisfactory peer and adult relationships, and attempts to adapt the curriculum to this group.

Also available from the Office of Education is a pamphlet in the *Selected References* series,

"About Children in Grades Seven and Eight" (No. 21). This annotated bibliography groups references under the topics of adolescents understanding themselves, teen-age cliques and gangs, understanding their parents, themselves, and each other, their intellectual capacities, knowledge acquired from the cliques and gangs, how the school can help these young people to grow up, and ways in which these young people have been studied.

Pamphlets in the *Education Briefs* and *Selected References* series may be ordered from the U. S. Office of Education, Washington 25.



Peoples of the Southwest: Patterns of Prejudice, a penetrating analysis by William H. Cooke, is the subject of a new pamphlet recently released by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. *Peoples of the Southwest* is a study of the sprawling Southwest and the hundreds of thousands of families who have migrated there in a single generation—the greatest influx in that region's history. The pamphlet was published in cooperation with the American Education Fellowship, as the 16th in the ADL's series of Freedom Pamphlets dealing with human relations themes.

Peoples of the Southwest may be ordered from the Anti-Defamation League, 212 Fifth Ave., New York 10.



Here are the Junior Literary Guild selections for the month of December, 1951:

For boys and girls 6, 7, and 8 years of age: *Flip and the Morning*, by Wesley Dennis. Viking Press, \$2.00.

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years of age: *Sandy's Spurs*, by Lavinia R. Davis. Doubleday, \$2.50.

For older girls, 12 to 16 years of age: *Copper's Chance*, by Jane S. McIlvaine. McCrae Smith, \$2.50.

For older boys, 12 to 16 years of age: *Royal Red*, by Jack O'Brien. Winston, \$2.50.

Review and Criticism

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH is proud of its book section. Its high quality has been made possible by the generous cooperation of a staff of distinguished writers, teachers, and librarians from many parts of the United States. Their reviews are discerning, critical, and interesting. They are based on a warm and sympathetic understanding of children and a knowledge of the craft of writing.

In the past, we have made an attempt to give a fairly full, though critical, coverage of the large current output of children's books. Today the supply of excellent publications in this field is too great to permit continuance of such coverage. Because of space limitations, and in order not to reduce the length of reviews to ineffectually brief commentaries, we shall endeavor ordinarily to publish reviews of only those publications which are highly recommended by our reviewers. This policy will not, of course, preclude negative comments in reviews of significant books.

To save space, we must usually avoid publishing the institutional connections of our reviewers. We hope, however, from time to time to list and identify the members of our reviewing staff, and present herewith the persons who are currently contributing to this department.

—Editor

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Denver, Colorado

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Mr. Herbert S. Zim
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois

For the Teacher

British and American English since 1900. By
Eric Partridge and John W. Clark. Philosophical Library, \$4.75.

Urbane commentary on recent trends in the use of English—spoken, written, literary, non-literary (Mr. Partridge for Britain, Mr. Clark for America). Discursive at times, and occasionally ill-tempered (as in the incredibly oversimplified evaluation of the effect of "Educators" upon the teaching of English), the writers nevertheless succeed in tracing the development of the language in a manner that is both thoughtful and entertaining. Special contributors have written chapters on English in Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and India. American readers will be especially in-

terested in the chapters on American vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling.

Television and Our Children. By Robert Lewis Shayon. With Introduction by Telford Taylor. Longman's Green, \$1.50.

Taking appropriate lines from "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" to cue his chapters, Mr. Shayon has surveyed the problems TV presents. He deals first with the home (the case against TV; the facts about children's televiwing; why children watch TV excessively; and winning the home front war against the pied piper), and secondly with the community (why broadcasters act as they do; the FCC looks to you; the listener council movement; and education's challenge in TV). The whole is well-written, and reflects a vast experience in a total of less than 100 pages.

In his analysis of the impact of TV on children, parents, and the family, the author summarizes the numerous studies of the effects of TV on children (heaviest child viewing is in the age group 5-6), and penetrates clearly the half-truths and rationalizations now so common among parents in their reactions to TV. His advice to parents and educators is to help the children master TV, through developing discriminating taste rather than vainly to command the (TV) waves to recede, or to fall into addiction to its undesirable programs. His advice to citizens parallels the other: inform ourselves as to why TV is as it is, and take the measures (viewer councils, support of educational TV station plans, including reservation of channels) necessary to develop a TV system which will serve our needs, rather than permitting it to become a frankenstein.

Dallas W. Smythe

For Early Adolescents

The Real Book about Amazing Animals. By
Alec Dickinson
The Real Book about Baseball. By Lyman Hopkins

- The Real Book about Inventions. By Samuel Epstein
 The Real Book about Abraham Lincoln. By Michael Borham
 The Real Book about George Washington Carver. By Harold Coy
 The Real Book about Trains. By Davis Cole
 The Real Book about Magic. By Joseph Leeming
 The Real Book about Dogs. By Jane Sherman
 The Real Book about Stars. By Hal Goodwin
 The Real Book about Making Dolls & Doll Clothes. By Catherine Roberts
 Garden City, \$1.25 each.

When a publisher announces a series of thirty informational books and puts down ten finished volumes to prove his intentions, it's rather obvious that things are happening. Series of books for children tend to develop gradually. This one springs into life full-bodied and well developed. Even your first glance at the new series makes you sit up and take notice. First there is the \$1.25 price tag on books which run about 190 pages. All are full, solid books with a reasonable amount of simple straightforward illustration. Then there is the scope of the series, which to judge by the first ten, will touch on about every topic that young readers from 10 to 15 can handle. The books are all informational, some stress the "how-to" angle, some are biographical, but all give the facts directly for what they are worth. Finally, though by diverse authors and illustrators, the books are of top quality. The editor, Helen Hoke, has done her job well and has set a pattern which will be as attractive to parents, teachers, and librarians as it will be to the younger readers.

The informational books, singly and in series, which have come in a flood these recent years, are mainly directed towards younger readers than the Real Book series. Will the comic-book set take to this new offering? Will the conservative use of illustrations prove a

handicap? This is a mass production venture depending on large sales for success, and it has a fighting chance to succeed for, if any books have the "stuff," it is this new series.

H. S. Zim

- Mary McLeod Bethune.* By Catherine Owens Pearse. Vanguard, \$2.75.

Put down that book. *You can't read.*" That is what a little white girl told Mary McLeod, one of seventeen children born of slave parents, when Mrs. Bethune was a very little girl. The stinging rebuke was not completely understood at the time, but it was never forgotten. Not only did Mary McLeod learn to read; she has helped thousands of Negro boys and girls to learn to read. She has helped to emancipate her people; she has built bridges of understanding between Negroes and whites.

The story of Mrs. Bethune's life is a thrilling one and it is told in a thrilling manner. This is an even better book than Catherine Pearse's previous volumes on Einstein and Gandhi. Better than average readers in the upper elementary school will enjoy it; teachers will be humbled and stimulated by this account of a great contemporary educator.

Leonard S. Kenworthy

- Behold Your Queen.* By Gladys Malvern, Decorations by Corinne Malvern. Longmans, Green, \$2.50.

Behold Your Queen is a tale of the Biblical heroine, Esther, the girl-queen of Persia. But where most Biblical stories are written for children with the barest of elaboration, Miss Malvern has embroidered her novel with details of life and happenings in the ancient city of Babylon which show evidence of considerable research. The novel opens with the country-wide search to find the most beautiful girl in Persia who will be the new queen. How Esther, a Hebrew, wins the beauty contest, how she waits in the place for over a year while the king interviews a different girl each day, how she finally meets the king and is chosen by him,

how by her courageous action she saves her people from destruction plotted by the evil Haman, make a romantic, exciting story, beautifully written, that should fascinate young adolescents, as well as many adults. This reviewer found it impossible to put down the book until it was finished.

Celia B. Stendler

Wild Horses of Rainrock. By William Marshall Rush. Decorations by Ralph Roy, Jr. Longmans, Green and Co. \$2.50.

This is the story of Dan Gordon, the young nephew of the owner of a western ranch. Dan's uncle was a cross, cantankerous old man who made life miserable for Dan, as did the cow hands who worked on the ranch. Dan makes good, however, when he discovers a herd of wild horses on top of a mountain inaccessible to any human being. He breaks Pippin, the beautiful wild mare, in an exhausting session and wins a reputation for himself and a place in his uncle's heart. *Wild Horses of Rainrock* pulls out all the stops, but provides exciting reading for 12 to 16 years olds.

Celia B. Stendler

Ginnie Joins In. By Catherine Wooley, 1951.

Ginnie, who was twelve, wanted more than anything to be like her girl friends. She was self-conscious because she did not think that she was pretty and because she could not swim. Through one long summer at the lake with her friends she learned that being herself was the best way to be lovely and that learning to swim was fun when she let others help her. Ginnie's story is that of many little girls who are beginning to grow up. The times of uneasiness and embarrassment are recorded with a sympathetic understanding that will convince any young reader that she does not have problems that are too big for her.

Mary J. Tingle

Everyday Weather and How It Works. By Herman Schneider. Illustrated by Jeanne Bendick. McGraw-Hill, \$2.75.

It's a temptation to say that, in spite of

the ballyhoo in *Life, Everyday Weather and How It Works* is a fine book. It's a book for the classroom, library, and home bookshelf, packed with all facts about the weather and with dozens of things you can do about it; like measuring the wind velocity or gauging the rainfall. It's a book to read, for the story of the weather unrolls like the afternoon clouds, and moves along just as steadily. Try it instead of the more formidable presentation in the textbooks. You'll enjoy the weather all the more for your understanding of it. Schneider's book is as good for the teacher or the "man in the street" as for younger readers from fifth grade upward.

H. S. Zim

Our Fighting "Jets." By Maj. C. B. Colby. Illustrated by Paul Plecan. Coward-McCann, \$1.00.

Full page photos and drawings from three points of view will help any upper elementary or high school boy identify jet military planes he is likely to see, if he looks fast enough. Twenty-two planes are described with simple tables of technical data about each.

H. S. Zim

Windruff of Links Tor. By Joseph E. Chipperfield. Illustrated by Helen Torrey. Longmans, Green & Co., \$3.00.

Windruff is a shepherd puppy, who is coaxed from his farmyard home by Redbrush, a fox after Redbrush's own cubs are stolen by gypsies. Windruff leads a wild life with Redbrush on the moors of western England. The fox, however, deserts the dog and Windruff makes friends with a wild mastiff. Together they have many exciting adventures, but Windruff loses the mastiff, too, this companion through death. Eventually he is coaxed back to the farm where he was born. Mr. Chipperfield has caught the flavor of the woods in his writing and made them mysteriously real and exciting to the reader. He has written a story that will appeal particularly to the mature yet poetic mind of young adolescents.

Celia B. Stendler

The Golden Palomino. By Billy Warren. David McKay, \$2.50.

Billy Warren, author-artist, has produced another story of the West about a horse that any boy would covet. Ted Farraday, fourteen, of the Wagon Wheel Ranch, helps with the capture and training of Wild Fire, the golden palomino. Then his big moment comes when he rides the relay race in which his ranch wins. Because of all of this, Tony, the crippled Mexican boy, can have the operation he needs to be able to walk and ride again.

Lyla Hoffine

A Girl Called Hank. By Amelia Elizabeth Walden. Morrow, \$2.50.

Hank is the captain and star of the girls' basketball team. Gregory Sutherland is the handsome newspaper reporter with an interest in dramatics. Maggie Dorn is the new coach with an unhappy past. Francie Weller is the villain who reforms. Hank, Greg and Francie are high school seniors. This is a boy dates girl book for senior high school girls. There is much indirect teaching in conduct and correct dress.

Lyla Hoffine

The Mystery of Crystal Canyon. By Rutherford Montgomery. Illustrated by Taylor Oughton, Winston, \$2.50.

The plot in this story is satisfying to the immature reader who needs clear evidence of the direction in which the story is going.

The book is probably intended for boy readers from 5th grade through junior high school. It is a Western mystery full of the words and deeds that young adolescents love. The author knows his business and tells a good yarn about the mysterious disappearance of Matt Milner, the saving of Shag, a good dog, from becoming a killer and the capture of a beautiful wild stallion. It has the stuff that makes boys (and girls, too, of course) want to read.

Lyla Hoffine

Awol the Courier. By Bertrand Shurtliff. Illustrated by Diana Thorne. Bobbs-Merrill, \$2.50.

Older boys who already know the exciting adventure of Awol in Europe in World War II, in Australia, or in India know that this new book, *Awol the Courier*, promises one thrilling exploit after another. In this story Awol, the great Doberman pinscher messenger dog, saves the day for South Korean and United Nations armies in the summer of 1950. Carrying important messages from United Nations forces to their spies among the North Koreans, in the thick of battle he crashes across the Thirty-Eighth Parallel time and again.

Dorothy Hinman

Calling for Isabel. By Virginia-Murrell Jeffries. Longmans, Green, \$2.25.

When Mark, the favorite boy friend, comments, "nobody dances with librarians," Isabel's dreams of the future seem thrown into hopeless confusion. Whether, then, to please her professor father by fulfilling her own longing to work with books or her mother by becoming a charming hostess and efficient homemaker is the most important problem of the many Isabel encounters in her busy high-school days. A wholesome family life and a fine friendship with her father slowly bring her to clarity of vision.

The author gives counsel perhaps too obviously, but the advice is all sensible and would very likely be accepted because it considers questions that often trouble high-school girls. As an interesting story, it has what teen-age girls want—school, parties, misunderstandings, reconciliations, dates, love.

Dorothy Hinman

Avalanche Patrol. By Montgomery Meigs Atwater. Random \$2.50.

Nineteen-year-old Brad Davis trained forester, suddenly finds himself avalanche patrolman at a large Rocky Mountain ski resort. As if it were not enough to be responsible for the safety of hundreds of skiers, he is thrown into the thick of a murder mystery. His predecessor, Max Luther, a Swiss mountaineer, had dis-

peared. How Brad was instrumental in trapping the murderers makes the kind of exciting adventure story for which upper-grade boys ask. The book has, in addition to a good tale, a portrayal of life in a luxurious ski resort and very interesting information regarding avalanche forecasting.

Dorothy Hinman

Bonus Pitcher. By Frank Waldman. Illustrated by Robert Candy. Houghton Mifflin Company, \$2.50.

All boys — and girls, too — who can read and understand the language of baseball will enjoy this story of Roy Turner, a slim quiet boy on a small town team who was signed up at \$40,000 a year to train as a possible future pitcher for the Red Sox. The story is not the usual "rise of a star" type but a convincing account of Roy's struggle to improve his playing, to overcome a seventh inning jinx, and to work against the jealousies of some of his fellow-players—especially the man who later becomes manager of the Red Sox. Incidentally, boys will get many practical pointers which will help them in their own pitching.

Elsie W. Adams

A First Electrical Book for Boys. By Alfred Morgan. Illustrated by the author. Charles Scribner's Sons, \$3.00.

This revised book is designed to acquaint one with the history, nature, and uses of one of the most fascinating of all subjects—electricity. It begins by developing the idea of what electricity is and proceeds to touch on such topics as magnetism, batteries, communications, recent developments in the area of radio, television, radar, and electronics. Included throughout the book are well illustrated experiments which can be performed with simple, easy-to-get equipment, and which will lead toward an understanding of the basic concepts of electricity. Although written with boys in mind, there is no reason why girls cannot find much of interest in the book. Upper elementary teachers will probably find this book valuable as supple-

mentary reading for both themselves and their students.

Charles E. Burleson

Seven Beaver Skins, by Erick Berry

I Heard of a River, by Elsie Singmaster

The Sign of the Golden Fish, by Gertrude Robinson

Song of the Pines, by Walter and Marion Havighurst

Footprints of the Dragon, by Vanya Oakes

Tidewater Valley, by Joe Evaline Lundy

The Silver Fleece, by Florence Crannell Means and Carl Means

Colt of Destiny, by Alida Malkus

Door to the North, by Elizabeth Coatsworth

Chariot in the Sky, by Arna Bontemps

Watergate, by Herbert Best.

The Beckoning Hills, by Joseph H. Gage

Seek the Dark Gold, by Jo Evalin Lundy

"The Land of the Free Series," edited by Erick Berry. John C. Winston, \$2.50.

The stories in this series of historical novels for young people are built around the emigration of various national groups to America. The adjustments they made in adapting to our way of life, and their contributions to our culture, are basic to the plots. Some of the characters are real in history, others fictional. The books are both well-written and entertaining. In most instances, there is a foreword or an afterword describing historical backgrounds and sources.

Paul Hale

The Mystery of the Polly Harris. By Mary Treadgold. Illustrated by Pat Marriott. Doubleday.

When Mick and Carolyn Templeton, teenage prep school students, went to Mr. Pontifex's school in London to cram for entrance exams to St. Dorothy's, they expected a very dull time. Before they left the taxi at their boarding house, however, they knew that they were in the middle of a mystery. Exciting subway trips,

ventures into strange buildings, secret conferences, and breathless bits of spying led them to a band of smugglers, whom they helped to capture. The story has a real appeal for the mystery-loving junior high school student.

Mary J. Tingle

For the Middle Grades

The Great Whales. By Herbert S. Zim. Illustrated by James Gordon Irving. William Morrow & Company, \$2.00.

Youngsters and adults alike will delight in reading this book about the Great Whales. With its lucid text and remarkable illustrations, it is one of the best books written about our seagoing mammalian "cousins." Dr. Zim introduces you to many kinds of whales including the Right, Blue, Gray, Bowhead, Finback, Humpback, and Sperm whales, and tells how they live, what they eat, their romancing and reproduction, care of the young whale, commercial whaling, and many other interesting facts about the Great Whales. You find out the basis for the whaler's expression, "Thar she blows." You learn about the great depths to which the whale can dive and how they are suited for this. In short, you find out many things concerning the whale that you probably never knew. This little book would be a useful addition to any personal or school library.

Charles E. Burleson

Rocks and Their Stories. By Carroll and Mildred Fenton. Doubleday and Co., \$2.50.

Schools and libraries not owning a copy of the Fentons' *Rock Book* (and those with limited budgets too) will find *Rocks and Their Stories* very adequate. The fine photographs and clear, accurate text, hallmarks of the Fenton books, are again present. The book describes and pictures nearly all common rocks found in this country. It uses them to interpret the stories of glacial scratches, concretions, cross-bedded layers and lava flows. The chapter on rock collections will help the neophyte geologist.

H. S. Zim

Washington. The Nation's First Hero. By Jeanette Eaton. Illustrated by Ralph Ray. Morrow Junior Books, \$2.00.

Eight to twelve year olds will enjoy this true story of the life of Washington from the age of twenty one until his death. The story is packed with action—Washington's dangerous mission into Indian country, the beginnings of the revolt against England, the building up of an army in Boston, the thrilling tale of the battle of Trenton. Children will learn history painlessly from this book. It would make a much better contribution if the author had also included more of the meaning of these revolutionary times in terms of our democratic ideals.

Celia B. Stendler

Pirates, Ships and Sailors. By Kathryn and Byron Jackson. Illustrated by Gustaf Tenggren. Simon and Schuster. A Giant Golden Book.

To write a review in pure superlatives is a seldom-realized dream of book reviewers. But here is the opportunity!

This thirteen by ten inch book is packed with forty-two delightful short stories and poems. In spite of the cutthroat atmosphere suggested by the title, the book will not contribute to insomnia for even the most sensitive child. The stories, chanteys, and poems are deftly and intriguingly written with children as the heroes or heroines in most of them. Profuse illustrations with restrained, built-in humor contribute to making the book a colorful gem.

The book has an unusual interest range. Four-year olds will understand and enjoy many of the stories, twelve-year olds can read and relish all of the book and adults will treasure the illustrations. The book's intellectual richness is noteworthy. The content and illustrations are idea-full. Even the landlocked Midwestern child will understand such salty terms as "astern," "lubber," "batten down hatches" and many others.

Fred P. Barnes

Pippi Longstocking. By Astrid Lindgren. Translated from the Swedish by Florence Lamborn. Illustrated by Louis S. Glanzman. Viking, \$2.00.

Children in the middle grades who enjoy fanciful tales will follow the hilarious escapades of Pippi Longstocking with great interest. Without any grown-ups to guide her behavior, for she lived with a horse and a monkey, her independent spirit knew no restraint and her imagination recognized no limitations. Boys and girls will be entertained by her harum-scarum experiences and by the amusing black and white illustrations which portray Pippi's tomboyish life.

Hannah M. Lindahl

You and Space Travel. By John Lewellen. Illustrated by Winnie Fitch and Joe Phalen. Children's Press, \$1.50.

It's about time the younger generation gave some serious thought to the easiest and best ways to plan a weekend on the moon or a summer's trip to Mars. Here is a book to start them early on their planning. The book starts off a bit slowly; touching on helicopters, conventional and jet type engines, but it soon gets to rockets and all the related problems of space travel. The sub-teen-age boys will devour the details and will find the diagrams in the book clear and self-explanatory. Most of the other illustrations, which are weak and pointless, detract from the book. However, as an introduction to space travel, John Lewellen's primer has no equal and no competitor.

H. S. Zim

The Squirrel That Remembered. Written and illustrated by Dana Saintsburg. Viking, \$2.00.

Rose as a young English squirrel came to America where she met and married a young American squirrel, Mr. Nutcracker. The Nutcrackers lived in Central Park. Rose became Grandma Nutcracker but never forgot England and longed to hear English voices again, so when she heard a young English girl refusing

to marry a young American she put in her paw. Grandma, with the help of her grandson Nutmeg, changes the young English girl's mind.

Lyla Hoffine

Jungle Child. By Caroline Davis. Illustrated by Jean Martinez. Viking, \$2.50.

Elf's father, a busy Forest Officer in India, left his little motherless daughter entirely to the care of her ayah. Consequently the tomboy Elf has jungle experiences unheralded for by the most adventuresome child. Not only are there exciting incidents but fascinating descriptions of the jungle. Although, of course, these descriptions hold up the action, even the average intermediate-grade reader will thoroughly enjoy Elf's going on an elephant hunt, riding on teak rafts with loggers, and running away into the jungle.

Dorothy Hinman

Perilous Voyage. By Elsie Ball. Illustrated by Ralph Ray. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$1.75.

Rufus, son of the chief of a mountain tribe in the Roman Empire of New Testament days, is beset by conflicting loyalties. It was the custom among his people that when a man was slain his nearest relatives must avenge his death, so when his father is betrayed by Arzon, a member of his tribe, Rufus knows that he must kill him though he is the brother of his own best friend.

The dangers which Rufus meets as he faces the world alone, the decisions he must make as he deserts friends to fulfill his purpose to avenge his father's death, and his ultimate acceptance of Christian faith and action when he meets the Apostle Paul make this a story which will appeal to ten-eleven-and-twelve year olds who want action in their stories but who, also, are approaching the age when they seek values and ideals.

Elsie W. Adams

Good Luck Mary Ann! By Agnes Louise Dean. Illustrated by Katherine R. Wireman. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$2.00.

Good Luck Mary Ann! will be very satisfying to young readers who like down-to-earth

stories of children and food. Good things to eat abound in every chapter of this book about Mary Ann who is "on trial" for a week and hoping with all her heart to be invited to stay the whole summer with Aunt Sophia in her little white cottage on the Cape with the blue Atlantic Ocean for a front yard. An old-fashioned word, "wholesome" seems to apply to this book, and most children will not be too concerned because Mary Ann and the Hoskins twins are a bit too sweet and good at all times.

Elsie W. Adams

Saddle for Hoskie. By Elizabeth Pack. Illustrated by Manning de V. Lee. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$1.50.

Hoskie is a Navajo boy who hungers for a Mexican hand-carved saddle which hangs in the trader's store. He finally owns it and puts it on his pinto pony. But before he does the story carries him through many fast-moving experiences. Any middle-grades youngster — boy or girl — can read this simple and charming story with profit and pleasure. Told by a person who lived and taught in the Southwest, the story is as compelling as it is authentic. It is calmly thoughtful yet rapidly paced. It may be savored yet it is exciting. All in all, it is an exceptionally fine children's story of a little-known slice of American life.

Fred P. Barnes

Thunder Wings: The Story of a Ruffed Grouse. By Alice L. Earle. Illustrated by the author. William Morrow, \$2.00.

This is the story of Ruff from the time he tapped his way out of his own eggshell until he was engaged in the preliminaries of making more eggs with the connivance of a female grouse who thought he "was the very finest bird in the woods." Written in a vein of tasteful humor, the account of Ruff is a fascinating, factual story of the growth and development of the grouse throughout the year. Generous drawings fill the book. They are accurate, instructive and action-packed. The physical properties of the book are identical with the other Morrow book reported by this reviewer. Chil-

dren from nine to twelve or older can read, understand and enjoy the story.

Fred P. Barnes

Little Leo. By Leo Politi. Illustrated by the author. Scribner's, \$2.00.

"What a nice little family!" thought the people in New York City when they saw Papa and Mama and Teresa in her lovely blue bonnet and Leo in his Indian suit with the brightly feathered headdress. "What a lovely little family!" we echo as we follow them all the way from their ranch house in California to Grandpa's home in San Matteo, Italy. But that Indian costume brought trouble to Leo because, when he wore it to school, the children could think of nothing else. So Leo had all the mothers copy his suit and soon during playtime the little Italian village resounded with the wa-wa-wah of American Indian war-cries. If the text did no satisfactorily tell the story, the pictures more than would.

Amy A. Thompson

Patrick and the Golden Slippers. By Katherine Milhous. Illustrated by the author. Scribner's, \$2.00.

Illustrations and text combine beautifully to carry the fine story told in *Patrick and the Golden Slippers*. Vivid concrete details evoke pictures of Philadelphia's Mummers' Parade. Suspense marks nearly every page until Patrick finds himself at the head of the Brotherly Love String Band as its mascot. Every one loves a parade, little children most of all. This one is filled with music, dancing, singing, and with ludicrous and charming costumes; in fact, with all the fun and gayety we associate with New Year's Day even in the Quaker City.

Amy A. Thompson

Fujio. By Raymond Creekmore. Illustrated by the author. Macmillan, \$2.00.

When Raymond Creekmore uses, as the theme of his latest book, Fujio's desire to climb "the honorable mountain" of Fujiyama, he not only satisfies the eight-to-ten-year-old reader's need for achievement but, with unity, he pictures the Japanese lad's life as he pre-

pares for Papa San's go-ahead signal: "Do you think that you can climb the honorable mountain now?" The major similarities and the minor differences of children everywhere have harmonious parts in the story as Fujio makes himself strong for the journey. The soft nature of the lithographs, in contrast to the sharpness of line drawings, is excellent to suggest the darkness of the volcano and of the downlying country during the long night ascent to the rim of the crater.

Amy A. Thompson

The First Book of Trees. By M. B. Cormack. Illustrated by Helene Carter. Franklin Wats, \$1.75.

This introduction to the more common trees of the United States reveals in simple yet accurate and precise language what trees are, how they make and use food, how they grow, and some general and specific characteristics of many kinds. Almost 60 trees are described and illustrated. Each description classifies the tree as deciduous or evergreen, and gives information about its fruit, leaves, flowers, height, use, and where they grow. For the more advanced tree student the scientific name is given with the common name. Can be used effectively by the enthusiast as an aid in recognition and classification. Helene Carter's illustrations are skillfully done, accurate, and colorful.

Charles E. Burleson

Forest Animals and How to Draw Them. By Amy Hogeboom. Illustrated by the author. The Vanguard Press, \$1.50.

Youngsters will amaze themselves—and you—with the ease with which they can draw such forest animals as the fawn, beaver, rabbit, fox, and skunk, by following the clear and simple step-by-step directions in this little book. A circle for the body, an oval for the head, a few curved lines for the feet and tail, add eyes, ears, nose, whiskers, a nut, erase the extra lines and you have a life-like squirrel. Accompanying the direction is a full-page photograph with interesting information about each of the animals.

Charles E. Burleson

Sing-Along Sary. By Margaret and John Travers Moore. Illustrated by John Moment. Harcourt, Brace, \$2.00.

Sing-Along Sary tells of the hard work and the simple pleasures of farm life in Western Pennsylvania during the 1850's. Sarah Elizabeth, Sary Liz for short, and Zeke her brother are the main characters in the story. From early morning until night the two do the endless chores around the farm. There is very little money and none at all to spend for the fiddle which is Zeke's chief desire. How Sary Liz plans to use her pumpkins to get money for a fiddle, how the pumpkins are lost in a flash flood, and how Sary herself is surprised in the end provide humor and excitement in the story. Slow readers in grades five and six will find *Sing-Along Sary* easy and interesting reading. The suspense element in the story is good and Sary and Zeke behave like real children of ten and twelve. Good readers in grades three and four will find the book equally enjoyable.

Florence Bowden

Adventures with Reptiles, The Story of Ross Allen. By C. J. Hylander. Julian Messner, \$2.75.

Boys from ten up who still dream of being explorers will relish this account of the boy scout who grew up to do all the things scouts would die to do. Ross Allen is a self-educated naturalist, is a ranking amateur in the reptile field, who has won the cooperation and respect of professional scientists. He operates his famed Reptile Institute at Silver Springs, combining educational, scientific and commercial projects into an exciting and intriguing life. The book abounds with information about snakes, alligators and other reptiles, rounding out the story of the man who has made these animals his hobby and life work.

H. S. Zim

Town Meeting Means Me. By Mina Turner. Houghton Mifflin, \$1.50.

The idea behind this book was an excellent one, but the book itself is disappointing. Its title indicates that it is the story of Town

Meetings; actually it is the story of New England town government. The publishers state that it is intended for "first, second and third graders," but few children in the primary grades will be able to cope with "boards of assessors," "tax-review boards," and "constables," or sentences from 25 to 30 words in length. The lack of proper headings tends to confuse the reader as he moves from the explanation of one official's work to another. Despite these drawbacks, this small volume could be used profitably by some children in grades four and five.

Leonard S. Kenworthy

Mr. Dawson Had a Farm. By R. O. Work. Illustrated by Dorothy Maas, Bobbs-Merrill.

There has never been another farmer quite like Mr. Dawson. He did just the things any farmer might do: called the cows, moved a hill with a bulldozer, delivered eggs to his customers, and spaded his garden. What happened, however, when he did these matter-of-fact chores makes ten of the most amusing stories that any child can find. The humor, the simple language, the surprise endings to the stories, and the delightful illustrations make this one book no child should miss.

Mary J. Tingle

For Younger Children

Chuggy and the Blue Caboose. By Lydia and Don Freeman. Viking.

It is necessary to write two reviews on this book: one for those who find objectionable the practice of personification in children's stories, and the other for those who defend animistic fantasy as at least harmless to children.

The first review, for the objectors, can be handled quickly. This is the story of a steam engine and a caboose who (sic) talk to other railroad equipment or humans with equal facility, take responsibility for operation of the railroad yard, and fall in love. No sale.

Those who might hold the above criticism as unimportant, however, will question the

book on two other counts: The adult-level humor probably will be meaningless to children young enough to enjoy the story. And the story has a double climax which destroys its form as a narrative.

Other than this it is a bouncy little tale which many pre-school children will enjoy having read to them. The cartoonish illustrations are lively and colorful. The story is too simple and the vocabulary too difficult for school-age children.

Fred P. Barnes

Ellen Tebbits. By Beverly Cleary. Illustrated by Louis Darling. Morrow, \$2.00.

This amusing story of eight-year-old Ellen's everyday experiences in and out of school will delight children in the primary grades. Many humorous situations occur, particularly the creative dramatization of "The Pied Piper" in which Ellen as a Substitute Rat becomes hopelessly entangled in a Maypole dance. The author shows a sympathetic understanding of childhood in her revelation of Ellen's need for friendship and for the approval of her teachers. Black and white illustrations add to the charm of the text.

Hannah M. Lindahl

Bells for a Chinese Donkey. By Eleanor Frances Lattimore. William Morrow and Co., \$2.00.

There is a dearth of books for primary children in which life in foreign countries is shown with sympathy, accuracy, and charm. This author's latest book in a long series tells in simple but rhythmical prose about the everyday life of a little Chinese peasant who lived in a seacoast village. Kwei-li's reward for finding a rich child's silver bracelet is greater contentment with her own simple life and the bells she had long coveted for her pet donkey.

Hannah M. Lindahl

What Dog Is It? By Anna Pistorius. Wilcox & Follett, \$1.50.

Here is another in the series that seems to be working its way through the animal kingdom. Like its predecessors, *What Dog Is It?* follows what is apparently a sure-fire pattern:

ample color illustrations, simple text, an opportunity to participate in a guessing game, and attention to a subject in which children have a universal interest. The focus is primarily on identification of about 50 breeds. H. S. Zim

Lost and Found. By Kathryn Hitte. Illustrated by Priscilla Pointer. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, \$1.00.

What do baby kittens and puppies and little boys do when they get lost from their mothers? How do they find the way home?

Kathryn Hitte's simple story with its charming illustrations will delight the two- and three-year olds, bringing happy contentment in that "each one tried to get home, each one found the way home," and nobody was lost any more." Danylu Belser

Tools for Andy. By James S. Tippett. Illustrated by Kay Draper. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, \$1.50.

In this easy-to-read book, James Tippett has used his understanding of children, and his gift of writing verse and prose to provide a pleasant child-experience story. First and second graders who have gained some independence in reading will find information and entertainment in Andy's introduction to the uses of hammer, screw driver, wrench, shovel, saw, pliers, plane, and paint brush. They will like especially, as did Andy, the birthday surprise. The tone of warm, wholesome family relationship adds a sense of satisfaction for the reader. Mr. Tippett is a master hand at interpreting a child's curiosities and his response to his environment. Danylu Belser

Stripe: The Story of a Chipmunk. By Robert M. McClung. Illustrated by the author. William Morrow, \$2.00.

This is the story of a chipmunk from the time he is not much bigger than a bumblebee until he makes his own burrow and stores a winter's supply of food for himself. The intervening months are filled with the adventures and hazards of a chipmunk's world.

The account, told by a scientist, is a factual narrative. The excellent illustrations add much to the reality of the story and its informational value. However, the scientist's completeness and objectivity also provide one highly questionable section in the book. A rather frightening and brutal description of how one animal feeds on another is packed into ten rapid pages. This is a strong dose for any sensitive and imaginative child. The above is not an argument against providing children with the facts of nature. It is, rather, a plea for more careful story design and writing style when dealing with such subjects.

The binding of the book is only fair, the paper dull and good and the type is bold and clear. The book may be read by children of nine to twelve years.

Fred P. Barnes

Federico, the Flying Squirrel. By Tony Palazzo. Illustrated by the author. The Viking Press, \$2.50.

Follow this gay, adventuresome, brown flying squirrel as he argues with a tough little woodpecker over a hollow tree home, gathers and stores nuts, acorns, seeds, and other food for the winter, and scampers through the trees playing games with the neighborhood squirrels. One of Federico's best friends is Billy, the little boy who lives next door, and together they share many happy experiences. The story ends with an exciting rescue of Billy's cat's kitten who has ventured too high in a large oak tree. Children will enjoy the ink drawings and the warm brown creature that is Federico. A full-page color cut-out is included for those who wish to make Federico. Charles E. Burleson

A Song for Arabella. By Marguerite Leslie. Illustrated by Lumen Martin Winter. Coward-McCann, \$2.50.

A Song for Arabella is a charming story of a tiny red steam car which was built many years ago. The author portrays Arabella as a real person who meets disappointments, fears, loneliness, and happiness as she lives in turn with

Mr. Daring, Dr. Plumington, Miss Primrose, and Mr. Hobby. This is a swift moving story filled with the exciting experiences of Arabella. How the tiny car climbs the steep chutes at the fairs and how she wins in the race with a gasoline car gives many pages of thrilling reading. Girls and boys will love this story of the courageous little car. The gay and authentic illustrations of Lumen Winter add to the effectiveness of the story. Florence Bowden

Finders Keepers. Written and illustrated by Will and Nicolas. Harcourt, Brace, \$2.00.

Will and Nicholas have again combined as author and artist to produce a picture book which is distinguished by its striking, humorous illustrations and its original story. *finders keepers* tells the story of two dogs, Nap and Winkle, who have to decide on the ownership of a bone. In many instances, the book will appeal more to adults than it will to primary children who frequently prefer realistic pictures of animals and things. The omission of capital letters in the title may prove disconcerting to some teachers who are striving to show why and when capital letters are used.

Florence Bowden

What's in a Line? Written and illustrated by Leonard P. Kessler. (A first book of graphic expression) William R. Scott, Inc. (Book without a jacket, no price given.)

"Let's take a trip with a line," the author begins. And from there, the line grows into a boat, an elephant, a house, a table, a number, a word and a story! In fact, says the author, "A line can be most anything or can go most anywhere." This is another delightful picture book which must be seen to be appreciated because the line drawings tell as much of the story as does the brief text. The book is excellent as a "read to" and "talk about" story for kindergarten and first grade.

Florence Bowden

Skit and Skat. Written and illustrated by Morgan Dennis. Viking, \$1.50.

This is another of the delightful cat and dog stories for which Morgan Dennis is famous. On every page of the book is a lifelike portrait of the lively black cocker puppy Skit or the white Persian kitten Skat.

The action pictures of Skit and Skat really tell the story of the rivalry between the two and how they finally become friends. There is a short line of text on each page which will appeal to the six or the seven year old child who is beginning to read story books by himself.

Florence Bowden

The Real Santa Claus. By Marguerite Walters.

Illustrated by Meg Wohlberg. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., Inc., \$1.00.

The answer to the age old question as to who is the real Santa Claus is here appealing and cleverly given. Throughout the pages splashed with green and red Christmas colors and snow, four year old Jerry wanders from one Santa to another wondering whom he should ask for a sled. He takes his problem to his friend the Policeman who tells him that Santa Claus couldn't possibly do all his work alone so he has many helpers who work together. Jerry inadvertently becomes a helper when he rings the bell for one Santa who is collecting coins for the poor's Christmas dinner.

Textbooks Received

1. The Mastery of Reading Series.

Worlds of Adventure, by Matilda Bailey and Ullin W. Leavell.

Worlds of People, by Matilda Bailey and Ullin W. Leavell.

Worlds to Explore, by Matilda Bailey and Ullin W. Leavell. New York: American Book Company, 1951.

2. Reading Today Series.

Stories from Near and Far, by Ethel M. Orr, Edna M. Reed and Jane Franseh. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.

3. Scribner Social Studies Series.

Visiting Our Neighbors, by Clyde B. Moore and Dorothy E. Cooke. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.

4. Social Learnings Readers.

Bill's Story of the Wholesale Produce Market, by Marie Elizabeth Smith.

Joe's Story of the Airport, by Marie Elizabeth Smith. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.

5. *The Practice of Composition*, by John M. Kierzek. Form B, 3rd Edition. New York: Macmillan, 1951.6. *They Made America Great*; a first book in American History, by Edna McGuire. For grades 3, 4. New York: Macmillan, 1950, \$1.80.

7. Our Animal Story Books.

Shadow the Cat, by Edith Osswald and Mary M. Reed.

The Little Crow, by Edith Osswald and Mary M. Reed. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1950, \$.40.

8. Series by Paul Witty and the Educational Research Staff of Encyclopaedia Britannica Films Inc.

Farm Animals, by Paul Witty.

The Fireman, by Paul Witty.

Three Little Kittens, by Paul Witty.

Shep the Farm Dog, by Paul Witty.

The Food Store, by Paul Witty.

The Mailman, by Paul Witty.

Gray Squirrel, by Paul Witty.

A Day at the Fair, by Paul Witty. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1950.

9. English is Our Language Series.

English is Our Language, grades 3 to 6, by Edna L. Sterling, Hannah M. Lindahl, and Katharine Koch.

English is Our Language; My Study Book (for above), grades 3 through 6, by Edna L. Sterling, Hannah M. Lindahl, and Katharine Koch.

English is Our Language; Guide for Teaching (for above), grades 3 through 6, by Edna L. Sterling, Hannah M. Lindahl, and Katharine Koch. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1950.

10. *The Pupil's Own Speller*, by Arthur I. Gates, Henry D. Rinsland, Ina C. Sartorius, and Celeste Comegys Pardon, Grades 2 through 8, revised edition. New York: Macmillan, 1950, \$.88.11. *My Spelling*, by Gerald A. Yoakam, and Seward E. Daw, Revised Edition, grade 8. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1950, \$.88.12. *Tales From Here and There*, by W. W. Theisen and Guy L. Bond. New York: Macmillan, 1950, \$2.28.

13. The Language Arts Series.

Adventures Now and Then, by Emmett A. Betts, Sixth Reader, (Betts Basic Reader. New York: American Book Co., 1950, \$2.20.)

14. Around the World Series.

Australia and New Zealand, by William and Dorothy Irwin.

Great Britain and Canada, by Mary Russell.

Islands of the Western Pacific, by Winifred Lewis. New York: Macmillan, 1950, \$1.80.

15. *Secrets and Surprises*, by Irmegarde Eberle; Educational Consultants, Paul Witty and Margaret L. White. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1951.16. *Do and Dare*, by Barbara Nolen; Educational Consultant, Paul Witty. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1951.

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